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Vel. Fr. II C. 172



~~V4. H. E1797~~

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6/-

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THE
HENRIADE,

AN EPIC POEM,

IN
TEN CANTOS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

VOLTAIRE,
INTO ENGLISH RHYME,

WITH LARGE
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL NOTES.



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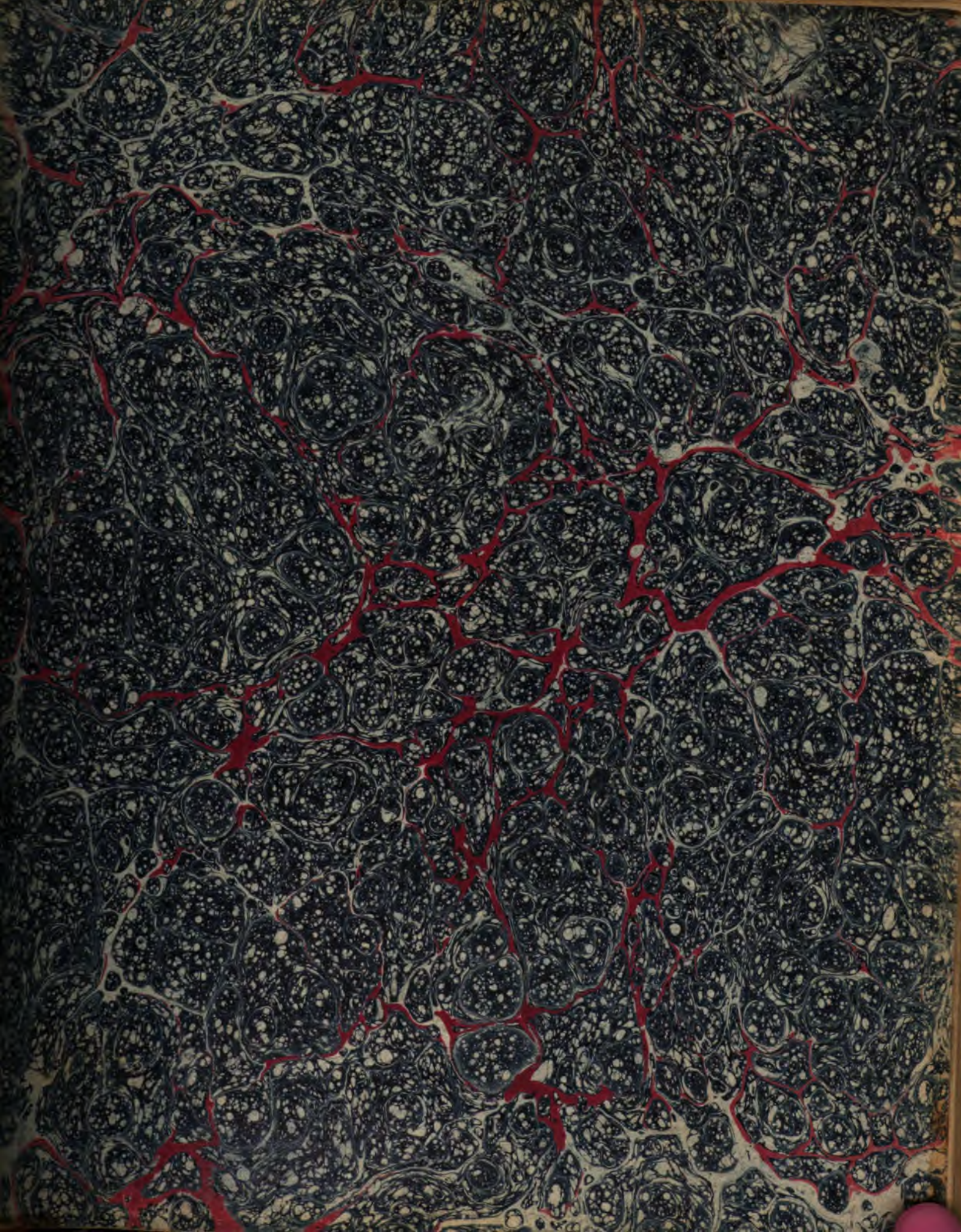
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[cupboard 5]



67-

~~XX~~

ARGUMENT.

SUBJECT of the poem. Invocation to Truth. Character of Henry III. State of France under his government. Ambition of the house of Guise. They form the League. Its pretext to defend the established religion against the reformers. Its aim to dethrone Henry III. the last prince of the house of Valois, to set aside the next heir, Henry the IVth of Bourbon, king of Navarre, who was of the reformed religion. Valois, driven from Paris by Guise and the League, is reconciled to Bourbon, to whom he had long been opposed by the artful intrigues of their enemies. Their united forces form the blockade of Paris, and there begins the action of the Poem. Valois sends Bourbon to England to sue for aid from Queen Elizabeth. He is cast by a storm upon the coast of Jersey, where he meets an Hermit who foretells to him his conversion to the Catholic faith and his accession to the throne of France. Description of England and its constitution.—The scene of the First Canto: Valois' camp before Paris, the Island of Jersey, and London.—Through the whole Poem Henry III. is called *Valois*, Henry IV. *Bourbon* (the accent strong on the last syllable) or *Henry*.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO I.

THE Chief (1) who reign'd o'er Gallia's realm I sing,
By glorious conquest, as by birth, a King ;
Who from misfortune learn'd a monarch's care,
To curb the factious, the submissive spare,
And (2) Spain, the League, and haughty Mayne o'erthrown, 5
Made France, her conqu'ror and her father own.

Descend, bright Truth! from Heaven's ethereal vault,
Guide my weak pen, give vigour to my thought,
Accustom kings thy warning voice to bear,
'Tis thine to dictate as 'tis theirs to hear ; 10
'Tis thine to bid contending nations know,
" What dire effects from civil discord flow :"
Tell how her standard on our plains she spread,
How princes err'd, and hapless subjects bled.

And, heavenly Truth ! if e'er thou didst descend 15
Thy voice with Fiction's silver sounds to blend ;

B

If

If e'er that lofty forehead stoop'd to wear
 The flow'ry wreath her graceful hands prepare ;
 If from her shade thy lustre brighter shine,
 Let her with me her magic garland twine,
 And lend what sportive Fancy can devise,
 Thy modest charms to deck, but not disguise.

20

Still reign'd Valois (3), but from his feeble hand
 The reins of empire flow'd without command ;
 Or laws unheeded, sacred right unknown,
 Valois reign'd not, but weakly fill'd the throne.
 No more that daring youth, whose bold career
 Astonish'd Europe eyed with jealous fear,
 Whose infant lessons were the fields he gain'd,
 By conquest in the art of heroes train'd.

25

30

Faded the laurels which his brows entwin'd,
 Her hero (4) when reluctant France resign'd,
 From the far North, attracted by his fame,
 To hail their king, when wond'ring nations came.

In diff'rent ranks, mankind are born to shine,
 Who grace the second, shame the foremost line.
 Great in the field, upon the throne misplac'd,
 The soldier, by the dastard king disgrac'd,
 Unman'd by pleasure, lost to cares of state,
 His languid arm shrunk from the sceptre's weight ;
 Joyeuse (5), D'Epernon, and a worthless band
 Of young, voluptuous minions rul'd the land ;
 With rank debauch, foul policy combin'd,
 In deep lethargic stupor plung'd his mind.

35

40

But

But fortune smil'd on Guise's (6) tow'ring race, 45
 And built their glory on the king's disgrace ;
 Those haughty rivals of the falling throne
 Rebellion and the League their parents own ;
 Theirs was the faction whose plebeian pride
 With rabble force the kingly name defied, 50
 The people theirs, blind engines of the great,
 Their tyrants they adore, their sovereign hate.
 Forc'd (7) from his palace, by his court betray'd,
 Too late he learn'd what friends his weakness made,
 A foreign standard guilty Paris rear'd, 55
 And all was ruin, when Bourbon appear'd.

Thro' the dark cloud the generous hero shone,
 Disspell'd the vapours which eclips'd the throne,
 Snatch'd the weak prince from ruin and from shame,
 And broke his slumbers with the voice of fame. 60
 Rome and Madrid, and ev'ry foe to France
 Trembling, behold the brother kings advance .
 On Paris now their gather'd force is bent,
 And Europe on the hapless town intent,
 In anxious doubt awaits the great event. 65 }
 Discord triumphant reigns within those walls,
 To arms! the church---To arms! the people calls;
 Inflames the League, ambitious Mayne excites,
 The haughty Spaniard to their aid invites.
 Discord, the foulest, fiercest fiend below, 70
 Whose cruel pleasure is in human woe,

Gorg'd with their blood who most her empire own,
 Beneath her scourge her fav'rite children groan,
 Tearing the bosom which her spirit fires,
 She damns the very wretch herself inspires.

75

Where, bending to the West, the silver Seine
 Forsakes the town and winds along the plain,
 Scenes charming now, delightful, calm retreat,
 Where Nature smiles, and Arts have fix'd their seat;
 Then fill'd with terror and with blood imbru'd,
 In dread array the monarch's legions stood.
 Thousands of heroes in his cause combin'd,
 In faith divided, but by vengeance join'd;
 Bourbon their head, whom ev'ry sect approv'd,
 Their feuds forgetting in the chief they lov'd;
 It seem'd their squadrons, by his ardor fir'd,
 One faith united, as one cause inspir'd.

80

85

The sainted father (8) of the Bourbon line,
 Who saw thro' time their future glory shine,
 On Henry with paternal fondness beam'd,
 His errors pity'd, but his heart esteem'd;
 For him, his mortal crown the saint design'd,
 And for immortal truth prepar'd his mind.
 But Henry's steps were guided to the throne
 By ways mysterious, to himself unknown,
 Lewis thro' all the perils of the field
 Fought with his hero, but his arm conceal'd;
 Had Henry known from whence his conquest came,
 His danger less, and less had been his fame.

90

95

Oft

Oft had the chiefs essay'd war's dreadful chance,
 Those plains had drunk the purest blood of France,
 And prowling Carnage, ravenous and free,
 Stalk'd thro' her wasted fields from sea to sea,
 When shame, and sorrow, lab'ring in his breast,
 His great ally the monarch thus address. 105

“ You that behold the sorrows which I bear,
 Those wrongs, those insults you yourself must share,
 'Tis not their king alone our foes pursue,
 But future vengeance meditate on you ;
 Your birth, your merit, mark you for the throne, 110
 But birth, and merit, they'll alike disown :
 Too well that gen'rous soul the rebels see,
 To trust to you, that pow'r they'd snatch from me.
 Religion (9) too, whose anger kings must dread,
 Already darts her lightnings round your head, 115
 Rome, that unarm'd, the warlike world commands,
 Has plac'd her thunders in the Spaniard's hands ;
 Allies and subjects faithless join my foes,
 Who boast of kingly blood, their king oppose :
 See Spain insulting bears our spoils away, 120
 Our plunder'd treasures are the stranger's prey ;
 Let's meet such fury with an equal rage,
 And foreign foes, with foreign force engage ;
 Haste then, in secret, to Britannia's queen,
 What tho' but seldom join'd our standard's seen, 125
 Tho' rival hatred, and contending pride,
 London and Paris ever must divide,

Wrong'd

Wrong'd as I am, and wounded in my fame,
 Subjects and country are an empty name,
 Let vengeance crush the people I detest, 130
 He's of my country most, who serves me best.
 My soul impatient burns, nor bears to wait
 The pompous march, and tedious forms of state,
 Go you alone—To whom so well belongs
 To rouse up monarchs for a monarch's wrongs; 135
 Seek Albion's shore, the sacred cause proclaim,
 Avenging hosts will rise at Bourbon's name:
 Conquest I know your valour still attends,
 But now your virtue must procure me friends."
 He ceas'd: the chief, who scorn'd with noble pride 140
 His dangers or his triumphs to divide,
 With sorrow heard the monarch's weak request,
 And sad remembrance heav'd his gen'rous breast.
 Ere then in virtue strong, above intrigue,
 With Condé (10) only, he defied the League: 145
 Obsequious still he heard his king, and stay'd
 His midway vengeance, and his fame delay'd.
 His troops, amaz'd, their leader's absence mourn,
 And doubt their safety, till their chief return;
 But absent, still his sword the rebels fear, 150
 Their frighted fancy paints the hero near,
 His fame, the throne's support, his country's shield,
 Scowls on their trembling ranks, and fills th' embattled field.
 Through Neustria's plains his rapid course he bends,
 Mornay (11) alone the prince's steps attends, 155
 Mornay,

Mornay, the friend sincere, by courts unstain'd,
 Too virtuous for the errors he maintain'd,
 With zeal and prudence, to his party true,
 The champion of his faith, and country too;
 Lov'd at the court, although by courtiers fear'd, 160
 Rome's greatest foe, and yet by Rome rever'd.

Where Dieppe (12) between two jutting rocks, whose feet
 Restless and loud eternal surges beat,
 To struggling boats her friendly arm extends,
 His ready bark th' impatient chief ascends. 165
 Now proudly swelling o'er the yielding tide
 Slow through the bay his sails majestic glide,
 Rough Boreas chain'd within his hollow cave,
 Soft breathing gales scarce move the silent wave,
 The canvass bends, and Neustria's sinking shore 170
 Lost in the grey horizon 's seen no more.

Albion's white cliffs the wary pilot knows,
 'Twixt seas and skies the doubtful line he shews,
 When round, the frothy surges curling rise,
 The sun turns pale, clouds blacken all the skies, 175
 Winds whistle shrill, and hollow, loud and hoarse,
 The bursting tempest breaks with gather'd force,
 Deep thunders roll, and down thro' ocean's womb
 The livid flashes light the gaping tomb;
 Impatient Death the boiling surge bestrides, 180
 Or on the howling blast triumphant rides.

Unmov'd, superior to the waves or wind,
 His country's fate revolving in his mind,

The

The hero sate ; to her he turn'd his eyes,
 Spurning the noisy threat'ning of the skies 185
 That stay'd his course. Thus (13), but less truly great,
 To Neptune's rage opposing Cæsar's fate,
 The proud usurper thro' the chafing tide
 Pompey and jarring elements defied,
 When one frail galley, to Hesperia's shore 190
 The destiny of Rome, the world, and Cæsar bore.

But God, whose eye this universe contains,
 Who curbs the storm, and o'er wide ocean reigns,
 Whose vast designs no mortal thought can probe,
 Who forms, or blots out empires from the globe, 195
 From his ethereal throne, above the skies,
 On France, and on her hero, cast his eyes :
 " Be to yon coast the shatter'd bark convey'd !"
 God will'd : and winds and murm'ring seas obey'd.
 Where Jersey seems emerging from the waves, 200
 A timely port the sinking vessel saves.

Near where the weather-beaten crew descends,
 A venerable grove its shade extends,
 Encircling rocks a friendly barrier form,
 Repel th' encroaching surge and break the storm. 205
 Deep in the bosom of this lonely wood,
 A gloomy grot, the work of Nature, stood ;
 Where long from courts retir'd, by men forgot,
 An hoary Hermit peace and wisdom sought ;
 Far from the cares which haunt the worldly mind, 210
 To know himself his studious thoughts confin'd,

And

And passion, by reflection now subdu'd,
 With deep regret his squander'd days he view'd ;
 The fev'rish joys of senseless youth deplor'd,
 And, rais'd by Nature's scenes to Nature's Lord,
 Waited resign'd, till this short exile o'er,
 Death shou'd his longing soul to God restore.

215

The God to whom his soul with fervor pray'd,
 His pious zeal with heav'nly wisdom paid,
 His holy spirit to the favour'd sage
 Unroll'd futurity's mysterious page.

220

Enlighten'd from above, he knew his guest,
 And near a fountain, spread his rural feast:
 Repasts like this the prince had often known,
 For oft descending from the stately throne,
 Far from its pomp, with humble friends he sought
 The purer pleasures of the rustic cot.

225

The fierce dissensions which thro' Europe rag'd,
 In high debate, meanwhile their minds engag'd.

Mornay inflexible, in Calvin's aid,

230

All human wisdom can bestow, display'd ;

While Henry, doubting, to his God apply'd

With zeal sincere, his wand'ring steps to guide.

" Truth beams on man with such enfeebled rays,

Obscur'd and lost in error's endless maze ;

235

In thee, Almighty Pow'r, our safety lies,

Must clouds and darkness wrap thee from our eyes ?

If God condemns his creature when he errs,

God would have taught the worship he prefers."

C.

" Forbear,

" Forbear," exclaim'd the sage.---" 'Tis not for man 240
 To sound the depths of God's mysterious plan ;
 'Tis ours to worship, to his will resign'd,
 Nor charge to God the errors of mankind.
 I saw the birth of Calvin's sect in France,
 Beheld it weak, with infant steps advance ; 245
 Exil'd, unown'd, an humble distance keep,
 By art, and meanness, into notice creep ;
 But soon from earth I saw the phantom rise,
 Rearing her brazen forehead to the skies,
 Insult mankind, the sov'reign's throne divide, 250
 And spurn our altars with o'erbearing pride.
 'Twas then alone, retir'd from courts, I mourn'd
 Our church insulted, our religion scorn'd.
 One only hope this aged bosom knows,
 This offspring of a day, time must expose ; 255
 Caprice and wayward passion gave it birth,
 And the same cause will drive it from the earth.
 The works of man, like man himself, are frail,
 As God ordains, they prosper or they fail ;
 High o'er the sphere of time, God only stands 260
 Unchang'd :-----founded by his almighty hands,
 His church, his living image here below,
 Defies the malice of a mortal foe :
 Doom'd, in the wisdom of th' eternal plan,
 To triumph over time, and hell and man. 265
 While baseless systems here our rage inflame,
 Beneath his throne, Truth ever dwells the same.

Oft

Oft on the lowly mind her light she pours,
 While weak presumptuous reason blindly soars.
 To you, who seek her with an honest zeal, 270
 Her mystic ways th' Almighty will reveal :
 Hence shall your steps by heav'nly power be led,
 Till Valois' crown adorn your destin'd head.
 God marks your bright career, at his dread word
 See Fame and Conquest wait upon your sword. 275
 But ere the vanquish'd realm its sov'reign own,
 Celestial Truth must beam around his throne.
 Far be those errors of the gen'rous mind,
 Those silken bonds which noblest spirits bind ;
 Fly syren pleasure, and the hero prove, 280
 Unsway'd by passion, unsubdu'd by love ;
 Let that great victory your glory crown,
 And seal your triumph o'er the rebel town.
 Pale Famine thro' her guilty streets shall rage,
 With wees unheard in any former age, 285
 Till Bourbon, touch'd with pity for his foe,
 Unlock the springs of life, and bid them flow.
 Then shall our country's evils last no more,
 Bourbon shall then, his father's God adore,
 And own that virtue is his constant care, 290
 That all who seek him his protection share."
 Each word the venerable hermit spoke,
 Like beams of light from heav'n, on Henry broke ;
 Back to those days, his mind transported ran,
 When man's Creator deign'd converse with man, 295

When miracles the voice of Heav'n convey'd,
 And simple virtue spoke, and kings obey'd.
 With grief retiring from the lonely cell,
 His tears were mingled with his last farewell ;
 But from that hour was opened to his eyes
 The dawn of days, which were not yet to rise.
 Mornay, th' inspired sounds with wonder heard,
 But God his light withheld, and Mornay err'd :
 In vain he pass'd for wise among mankind,
 For error ting'd the virtues of his mind.

300

305

While Henry's doubts the sacred prophet clear'd,
 The sun returning, drooping nature cheer'd ;
 His voice the fury of the tempest sooth'd,
 Silenc'd the winds, the heaving billows smooth'd ;
 He led the thoughtful hero to the shore,
 For Britain's happy coast the pilot bore.
 Her silver cliffs (14) expanding to his sight,
 Unfolded scenes of wonder and delight ;
 While the vast changes in her empire wrought,
 In silent admiration fix'd his thought.

310

315

That realm where long alternate factions reign'd,
 Whose blushing annals murder'd monarchs stain'd ;
 To kings and subjects, whose perverted laws,
 Of woes unnumber'd were the direful cause,
 Whose noblest blood in civil strife was pour'd,
 The scaffold draining what escap'd the sword :
 Peaceful a woman's empire then obey'd,
 A virgin queen the steady sceptre sway'd ;

320

Men

Men lov'd her laws, who ne'er lov'd laws before,
 Who slav'ry spurn'd, and freedom scarcely bore; 325
 Pois'd in her mind, the fate of nations hung,
 Eliza's fame thro' wond'ring Europe rung.
 Of ev'ry blessing in her queen secur'd,
 Britain forgets the days she once endur'd;
 Her tranquil plains with plenteous harvests smile, 330
 The globe's vast produce centers in her isle;
 Her trade restores, what lavish war devours,
 As clouds exhal'd, return in fruitful show'rs;
 Dreaded by land, almighty on the main
 Her pendants wave o'er ocean's boundless reign; 335
 Her private wealth the public force ensures,
 And laws protect what industry procures.
 Europe's proud capital, see London rise,
 The mart of all mankind, the world's surprize;
 Where arts and arms in glorious union meet, 340
 Misfortune's * refuge and the muse's seat.
 Where western beams yon Gothic structure gild,
 Those domes, ere now by superstition fill'd,
 Three powers contain, by common interest bound;
 What ancient wisdom sought, and Britain † found. 345

* Here the Translator owns the liberty taken with the original, but prefers the blame of adding, to the pain of suppressing this sentiment.

† An ancient author mentions the plan of the British constitution as a sublime theory too perfect for the nature of man in his days. Here too I willingly acknowledge my revolt from the servile chain of a translator: without wandering from my author's sense I have dwelt with pleasure upon a subject which almost hurried me from my humble situation, and made me forget I was to endeavour to express Voltaire's ideas, and not my own feelings.

First in the state, as in his subjects heart,
 Honour, and mercy, are the Monarch's part;
 In ancient splendour bright, from race to race,
 The Baron claims, by birth, a middle place;
 No more his jealous arms disturb the state,
 Justice and wisdom on his councils wait.

350

The people's Delegates, their own free choice,
 Without confusion, speak the gen'ral voice,
 Draw from the common stock, with even hands,
 The just proportion which the state demands :
 Restrain'd from ill, for good without control,
 The sceptre sways, and dignifies the whole.
 Divided, fatal to themselves ; but join'd,
 Invincible, and masters of mankind.

355

Thrice happy state, where, with obedient awe,
 The subject hears the sacred voice of law,
 And happier still, where monarchs truly wise,
 Their people's sacred rights have learn'd to prize.

360

" When," cries the hero, " like this happy isle,
 Shall wretched France in peaceful glory smile !
 See clos'd, ye monarchs who the world command,
 Wars iron portals by a woman's hand ;
 Britain shall still her laws, her sov'reign boast,
 While lawless faction riots on your coast ;

365

While France"—But as her fortunes he compar'd,
 Time drop'd his curtain, and the hero spar'd.

370

The prince now enter'd London's spacious wall,
 Where Plenty still attends, at Freedom's call.

The

The Tower (15) that badge of conquest first he view'd,
And next in sight, the royal palace stood. 375

With prudent Mornay for his whole escort,
He sought the sov'reign of the British court,
Without that vain parade, and empty state,
Which please the feelings of the little great,
But which the hero and the sage despise. 380

With energy which Truth alone supplies,
He made his country's ills in secret known,
Nor veil'd the crimes and errors of the throne ;
His lofty character the more display'd,
As humbly in his country's cause he pray'd. 385

The queen astonish'd cried, " And for Valois
His gen'rous sword does noble Henry draw ?
Sent by that monarch to our British shore,
Does Bourbon for his foe our aid implore ?
From where the sun darts forth his morning blaze, 390
To where in ocean's lap he hides his rays,
The world still echoes with your dire alarms,
Still hears the clangor of your hostile arms.
Is Bourbon's sword, so long the monarch's dread,
Rais'd to avert destruction from his head ?" 395

" Yes," he reply'd : " Valois' unhappy fate,
In deep oblivion sinks our mutual hate ;
By faction rul'd, a slave upon his throne,
Himself and me, too late the king has known.
What ills were spar'd, if to his artful foes 400
Himself and me alone, he'd dar'd oppose ;

But

But still by cunning and intrigue abus'd,
 I saw his weakness, and his rage excus'd.
 The foe I've conquer'd is no more my foe,
 And mine forgot, to 'venge his wrongs I go ; 405
 'Tis yours, illustrious queen, in such a cause,
 To bid your Britons claim the world's applause ;
 With me to save a tott'ring throne unite,
 'Tis godlike to protect a monarch's right."

The Queen impatient prest him to relate 410
 Whence flow'd the evils of his hapless state,
 What secret spring the sudden change produc'd,
 How from her sov'reign Paris was seduc'd ?

" Oft have I heard," she said, " the voice of fame
 In dismal sounds the bloody tale proclaim, 415
 But fame, nor measure nor distinction knows,
 Falsehood and truth, alike, her trumpet blows ;
 Her vague reports unheeded struck my ear,
 Truth from your lips unmix'd, I fain would hear ;
 For you, th' eventful contest more than view'd, 420
 Who now support the king, your arms subdu'd ;
 Say from what cause the mighty change proceeds,
 Bourbon alone, can speak of Bourbon's deeds :
 Your own exploits, the various turns of fate,
 A school for future kings, at length relate." 425

" Alas !" says Henry, " must remembrance raise
 The gloomy image of those dreadful days !
 Oh that to dark oblivion were consign'd,
 Deeds which brand endless shame upon mankind ;

Why

Why must my tongue unwillingly retrace
The crimes and errors of my guilty race ;
Reviving sorrow in my bosom swells,
My lips obey you, but my heart rebels ;
Let others seek such humbling truths to veil,
Gloss o'er our weakness and our crimes conceal,
Form'd in the school of war, a soldier's heart
Disdains the varnish of the statesman's art.

430

435



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NOTES

TO

CANTO I.

(1.) **THE** chief who reign'd.] Henry IV. descended in a direct line from Robert Count of Clermont, youngest son of Lewis IX. Saint Lewis who married Beatrix daughter of Agnes de Bourbon, heir of Archembault Lord of Bourbon, in the middle of the thirteenth century. He came to the throne of France three hundred years after the death of Saint Lewis, on the failure of the house of Valois in Henry III. Philip IV, de Valois, was the first king of that race in 1328. It furnished to France thirteen sovereigns, most of them unfortunate.

(2) Spain, the League, &c.] The League, or the Catholic League, was an association entered into, in 1576, by many powerful French families, headed by the Guises of the house of Lorraine, established in France, supported by the courts of Rome and Madrid, for the defence of the Roman Catholic religion against Calvin and his disciples. Religion was its motive with the people, and its pretext with the great. The Duke of Guise soon threw aside the mask, and openly aspired to the crown, to the exclusion of Henry III. of Valois, and the branch of Bourbon. He was murdered by the king's order in his presence, at Blois, in 1588. His youngest brother, the Duke of Mayne, succeeded him in his power over the League, and his ambitious projects. The power of the League in France lasted from 1571 to 1594. It is perhaps the most extraordinary event recorded in history; and Henry III. the most infatuated prince not to have foreseen, that, by declaring himself its chief, he became its slave. Unhappy king! the supporters of his crown were the enemies of his religion, and the supporters of his religion the enemies of his crown. The Protestants made war upon

him as a foe to their sect, and the Catholic League assassinated him for his connection with the chief of the Protestants. Suspected by both parties, from his want of principle, and despised by both, for his superstition and libertinism. A character most incomprehensible, says that great historian De Thou; in some things above even the dignity of a king, in others below the imbecility of a child. Father Daniel, the French historian, remarks, that from the civil wars of religion we may date the ruin of the naval power of France.

(3.) Still reign'd Valois.] Henry III. the last prince of the branch of Valois. From the succession of the house of Valois to the throne of France, arose the long and bloody wars between France and England under the Plantagenets, Edward III. and his successors claiming the crown of France in right of his mother, Isabella, sister to Charles the Fair, and his heir, if the Salic law had not been interpreted to her exclusion.

(4.) Her hero when reluctant France resign'd.] Henry III. when Duke of Anjou, commanded the armies of his brother Charles IX. against the Protestants, and gained, at the age of eighteen, the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour. His reputation was so great, that the Poles, on the extinction of their royal race of Jagellon, chose him for their king. He reigned one year in Poland, but lost there, and on the throne of France, to which he succeeded on the death of his brother Charles IX. in 1574, the fame he had acquired in the field. He would still have appeared deserving of a crown, if he had never worn one. He was made a knight of the English order of the Garter in 1585, and it was thought at one time Queen Elizabeth would have married him.

(5.) Joyeuse, D'Epernon.] This reign was called the reign of favourites, and offers a strange picture of impiety and superstition, bravery and effeminacy. Quelus, Saint Maigrin, Joyeuse D'Epernon Maugiron, were called the minions of the king; these names are mentioned in the original poem. For Quelus Henry had conceived a most extravagant passion. He has been reproached with the depravity of his taste from his earliest youth; his friendship for the Duke of Guise, whom he afterwards caused to be assassinated, was suspected not to be of the purest nature. In all the debaucheries of Henry III. there was a mixture of devotion; his minions were the companions of his spiritual retreats and his pilgrimages, and with them he used to inflict upon himself the penance of the discipline. His life was passed in all the effeminacy and delicacy of a coquetish beauty. He slept with gloves of a particular composition, to preserve the beauty of his hands, which surpassed that of any of the ladies of his court, and covered his

his face at night with a paste to preserve its freshness. These anecdotes, and many others of those times, are to be met with in the *Isle des Hermoprodites*, in the British Museum. Most of these favourites were notwithstanding men of great courage, and most of them came to an untimely end. Maugiron and Quelus were killed in a duel, St. Maigrin was assassinated for an affair of gallantry, Joyeuse was killed in battle. The king kissed their bodies after their death, preserved their hair, and took from the ears of Quelus rings which he himself had placed there. Mons. de l'Etoile says, they died without any symptoms of religion, Maugiron uttering horrid blasphemies, and Quelus constantly repeating, "Oh my king! my king!" and not one word of Christ or the Virgin. The epitaph made for Quelus is remarkable, "*Non injuriam sed mortem patienter tulit.*"—He could not bear an insult, but bore death with patience.

D'Epernon, of the family of La Valette, haughty, covetous, and ostentatious, enjoyed great power and died in a very advanced age.

(6) Guise's race.] The two brothers, the duke and cardinal, sons of the great Duke of Guise, murdered by Poltrot at Orleans. They were both assassinated at Blois by order of Henry III. in 1588. See Canto III.

(7) Fort'd from his palace.] Guise, invited by the League, entered Paris the 12th May, 1588, against the king's orders. The populace, who were the strength of his party, raised barricades round the palace, surrounded the life guards and made themselves masters of the king's person. But Guise allowed him to escape and retire from Paris. Those who would usurp a throne, says Montagne, find all the steps to it easy, except the last, which is generally beyond their reach.

(8) The sainted father.] Lewis IX. from whom descends the branch of Bourbon. Father Daniel, in his *History of France*, describes him as one of the greatest and most singular characters which ever existed. He died 1270, and was canonized by the church of Rome. Weak and inactive in the common occurrences of life, his genius rose as his fortunes required, even to the height of heroism.

(9.) Religion too.] Henry IV. king of Navarre, was solemnly excommunicated by Pope Sixtus V. in 1585. The Pope, in his bull, calls him an abominable and bastard descendant of the house of Bourbon, and deprives him and all the race of Condé for ever of their dominions and fiefs, and above all declares them incapable of inheriting the crown.

Although

Although the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé, were at that very time actually in arms at the head of the Protestants, the parliament of Paris, always ready to defend the dignity and liberty of the state, made the strongest remonstrances against this bull: Henry IV. published and stuck up on the door of the Vatican, that Sixtus, the pretended Pope, lied, and was himself an heretic.

(10) With Condé only.] Henry, prince of Condé, son to Lewis who was killed at Jarnac: In him were placed all the hopes of the Protestant party in France: he died at the age of thirty-five at St. Jean D'Angely. His wife, Charlotte de la Tremouille, was suspected of having caused his death. She was three months advanced in pregnancy when her husband died, and was brought to-bed six months after of the second Henry de Condé, whom a ridiculous tradition reports to have come into the world thirteen months after the death of his father.

(11.) Mornay alone.] Duplessis Mornay, the greatest and most virtuous character of the Protestant party, was born at Buy, the 5th of November, 1549. He was perfectly master of Latin and Greek, and knew as much Hebrew as can be known, which in those days was almost a miracle for a gentleman. His sword and his pen were ever ready in the cause of his religion and his king. He was the person sent by Henry IV. while he was yet only king of Navarre, to treat with Queen Elizabeth. In his negotiations he never received any other instructions from his king than a *carte blanche*, with his signature, and they were almost always attended with success, because he was a real statesman, and not an intriguing politician. His letters are written with great force and circumspection. Henry of Navarre never was himself in England. Queen Elizabeth had certainly the highest esteem for him, and often wished to see him, but never did. Here the Poet takes a liberty with truth, not easy perhaps to be excused in so recent an history, and has taken great pains to palliate this fiction, which was indeed almost necessary. The beautiful recital of the misfortunes of France, could come from none so well as Henry, and to no other person with such effect as to Elizabeth.

Mornay's negotiation was not attended with immediate success. The cause of his failure in his first application to the queen of England, is one among the innumerable instances of the littleness of court politics. Mornay had with him a gentleman called Bazenval, who took the liberty of turning into ridicule the queen's manner of pronouncing French, as *Pa ar Dieu* for *Par Dieu*, &c. She heard it; the negotiation became capacious, was broken off, and Henry IV. and the French Protestants were long deprived of the succours which they were in such need of. This anecdote is taken from the

Baron

Baron de Maurier's History of the Princes of Orange. When Henry IV. changed his religion, Duplessis Mornay made him the most bitter reproaches and never after appeared at his court.

(12) Where Dieppe.] A port of France opposite to the coast of Sussex. In this description of the storm, the translator, without quitting the sense of the author, may be said to have deviated from a literal translation. Where the lines are strong and animated, such a translation would not do justice to the spirit of the original.

(13.) Thus, but less truly great.] Cæsar waiting at Appollonia in Epirus for the forces he had left at Brundisium, impatient at their delay, threw himself disguised into a twelve-oared barge to cross over, though the seas were covered with Pompey's vessels. Scarce out of the port he was assailed by a most dreadful storm, the pilot ordered his sailors to make the land; but Cæsar starting from the bottom of the vessel, where he lay unknown, ordered him to proceed without fear, since he carried Cæsar and Cæsar's fortune.—See Lucan's *Pharsalia*, b. v.

(14.) Her silver cliffs.] In the edition of 1723, the scene of the Hermit is supposed to be in England, but in the other editions it is placed in the island of Jersey. In the same edition Voltaire took great pains, in a note on this passage, to vindicate his supposition of Henry's visit to Elizabeth. A French poet may deceive his readers, he says, for a few miles, if Virgil is allowed to deceive them in a period of three hundred years, in the interview of Æneas with Dido. It is sufficient to authorize the voyage of Henry to England, to place it in a time in which history does not give this prince any other occupation. This episode is the less removed from probability, by Elizabeth's having sent four thousand English to assist Henry a very short time after. But the true question is, whether Henry's discourse is sufficiently good to excuse the episode to those who blame it, and to authorize it to those who approve it.

(15) The Tower.] Some say the Tower is a monument of the Roman, and others of the Norman, conquest.

In the first editions of this poem Sully, and not Mornay, was supposed the friend and confidant of Henry. As he was one of the most remarkable characters of those days, the curious note Voltaire has given upon him will perhaps not be unacceptable. "I made choice of the Duke of Sully, because he was of the reformed church, always
inviolably

inviolably attached to his religion and to his king, and was afterwards ambassador in England. He was born at Rosny in 1559, and died at Villebon in 1641; so that he had seen Henry II. and Louis XIV. He was Grand *Voyer*, Grand Master of the Artillery, Grand Master of the Ports of France, Superintendant of the Finances, Duke, Peer, and Mareschal of France, and perhaps the only one to whom the staff was ever given as a mark of disgrace. He obtained it only as a compensation for the place of Grand Master of the Artillery, which the queen regent took from him in 1634. He was an intrepid warrior, and a still greater minister, incapable of deceiving his king, or of being himself deceived by the agents of finance. He was inflexible to courtiers whose avidity he found insatiable. In this respect his severity suited the economical temper of Henry IV. They called him the *Negatif*, and pretended that he did not even know how to pronounce the word *Yes*. This severity of disposition could be pleasing only to his master; accordingly the death of Henry IV. was the signal of the disgrace of the inflexible Sully. Lewis XIII. recalled him to court some time after to ask his advice: he came with repugnance. The young courtiers who governed Lewis XIII. wished, as young courtiers will do, to turn the old minister into ridicule, who appeared in this youthful court with a dress and manners long out of fashion. The duke said quietly to the king, Sir, when the king your father, of glorious memory, did me the honour to consult me, we never spoke of business till we had turned the buffoons and fools out of the room.

He never would consent to change his religion, but was among the first to persuade Henry to go to mass."

The reason Voltaire gives for putting Mornay in his place is, that the latter is the only character who answers the description of a true philosopher.

It is said, that he excluded Sully out of pique against a descendant of his family, with whom he is reported to have had a violent altercation. I do not know how far this may be true.



E

ARGU-

ARGUMENT.

HENRY the Gréat relates to Queen Elizabeth the origin and progress of the League, and the wars of religion in France.—His sentiments on religious toleration.—Character of Catherine of Medicis :—Of Francis II.—Of Charles IX.—Of Anthony king of Navarre, father to Henry :—Of Admiral Coligny.—Massacre of Paris.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO II.

OURS, mighty queen, is that severest curse,
Dissention springing from religion's source ;
Thro' all the scenes of blood which France affords,
'Tis zeal mistaken, whets our guilty swords.
Calvin and Rome, the Christian world divide, 5
Nor is it mine presumptuous to (1) decide !
While both alike th' Almighty sanction claim,
Deceit and passion are in both the same.
Of heav'nly truth if virtue be the test,
If vice, the child of error be confest, 10
If fraud and murder stamp the side that errs,
And patient candour, that which God prefers ;
Where must I seek ? With whom has truth remain'd ?
Both must be wrong, for both in blood are stain'd.
For me, who wield not heav'n's chastising rod, 15
Who leave God's vengeance, in the hands of God,

Drawn in my country's cause alone, my sword
 With bigot rage ne'er mock'd his peaceful word.
 Curs'd be the tyrants, who the mind controul,
 Chain the free thought, and dictate to the soul ; 20
 Curs'd, who by force convince, by terror preach,
 Whose blood-stain'd hands bely the truth they teach,
 Whose cruel zeal, with selfish int'rest blind,
 To please the God of peace, destroys mankind.
 Oh ! had our courtiers my opinions shar'd, 25
 What blood, O God ! what misery were spar'd ;
 But the two chiefs of Guise's (2^d) haughty line,
 No conscience could restrain, no laws confine.
 They, in religion's specious garb array'd,
 The facile crowd's too ready faith betray'd, 30
 Taught them their cause, as God's own cause to see,
 Inflam'd their zeal, and loos'd it all on me.
 You know the people, and the wars they wage,
 When dire religion consecrates their rage ;
 Spread her mysterious veil before their eyes, 35
 Their laws, their king, their country, they despise ;
 Oft, in a cause which neither understood,
 The brother's sword has drunk the brother's blood.
 Conscious how bigot zeal disturb'd the earth,
 You crush'd the fatal monster in its birth ; 40
 The rising spirit timely wisdom quell'd,
 Scarce the dark cloud was gather'd when dispell'd ;
 While laws and freedom British bosoms warm,
 Britons shall bless the pow'r, that laid th' impending storm.
 Not

Not such the plan which Medicis pursu'd, 45
 What ills from her ambition have accru'd !
 Perhaps, in gen'rous sympathy of woe,
 The mind of Medicis (3) you wish to know ;
 For me, unprejudic'd at least, I'll tell,
 What many speak of, none could know so well ; 50
 That close envelop'd mind was known to few,
 Of all its windings none possess'd the clew.
 Long at her court I sounded ev'ry thought,
 Watch'd ev'ry storm her brooding malice wrought ;
 Till danger taught me all her soul to know. 55

Her husband (4), snatch'd by Fate's disast'rous blow,
 Left her aspiring mind a boundless field :
 Three sons, train'd up the rod of pow'r to wield,
 Were each, in turn, her slave upon the throne,
 Or each detested, when he rul'd alone : 60
 Hatred and jealousy her arts maintain'd,
 While o'er the jarring court, supreme she reign'd ;
 With sure success, her fatal plans dispos'd,
 Condé to Guise, and France to France oppos'd,
 True to no party, but to gain her end, 65
 Prompt to embrace her foe, desert her friend ;
 A slave to pleasure, to ambition more,
 Impious, tho' superstition's chain she wore ;
 With ev'ry vice in fine, in woman born,
 Stript of the virtues which their mind adorn. 70

Pardon this hasty word which truth demands,
 Above her sex the British sov'reign stands ;

That

That sex, unrival'd grace alone betrays,
 And charms the world, her manly wisdom sways.
 Amidst her greatest men by Europe plac'd,
 A bright example for us all you've trac'd.

75

In early youth, by death untimely swept,
 The second Francis (5) with his fathers slept ;
 Govern'd by Guise, and fond of his controul,
 Nor vice nor virtue mark'd his feeble soul.

80

Still younger, Charles (6) a monarch's ensigns wore :
 But Medicis the weight of empire bore.
 To fix her pow'r, her policy design'd
 In endless infancy to chain his mind,
 And breathing foul dissention thro' his court,
 To raise, in civil broils, a sure support.
 Two rival sects, her baneful arts inflam'd,
 And streams of blood her jealous pow'r proclaim'd.

85

Dreux (7) first beheld their adverse banners wave,
 There her first signal civil fury gave ;
 In silent tombs where Gallia's monarchs dwell,
 Grown old in arms, great Montmorency (8) fell,
 The fated ball a British warrior sent,
 And clos'd an age in glorious dangers spent.
 Near Orleans, Guise (9), unworthy such a death,
 To Poltro's treach'rous hand resign'd his breath.
 My hapless father (10), wedded to the court,
 Weak, and against his will, the queen's support ;
 Inglorious led his life's uncertain course,
 Of all his evils, he himself the source ;

90

95

100

False

False to the cause his better judgment chose,
He fought and died, to serve his greatest foes.

Condé (11), who lov'd in me his brother's heir,
My youth protected with a father's care ;
His camp, the nurs'ry of my infant days,
I learn'd to emulate the warrior's praise ;
There, in the paths of war and glory train'd,
My soul the pleasures of a court disdain'd.

105

Oh, hapless day ! on Jarnac's fatal field,
What fury, Montesquiou, thy bosom steel'd ?
Shame ! from a warrior's hand, a murd'rer's blow
Strikes to the ground a bleeding helpless foe ;
Too weak to ward, or to revenge the deed,
I saw thy treach'rous wound, I saw him bleed.

110

Heav'n, to my infant weakness ever kind,
Still to an hero's care my youth consign'd ;
In Condé's place, like Condé too rever'd,
To guide my fortunes, Coligny (12) appear'd.
If in this bosom virtue spotless glow,
If Rome, that hates me, must esteem her foe,
If Europe grant me some small share of fame,
From you, illustrious Coligny, it came ;
From you, lamented, ever honour'd shade,
With you its growing strength my arm essay'd ;
Grown old in war, in glorious labour grey,
In honour's rugged path you led the way.
Our friends, with you and virtue on their side,
Fortune and Medicis, alike defied.

115

120

125

Ador'd

Ador'd by us, respected by our foes,
 Your fame still brighter from misfortune rose ; 130
 Dreadful alike, in vict'ry or retreat,
 Greater, and still more glorious, in defeat,
 Than mighty Gaston and Dunois appear,
 In all the triumphs of their bright career.

Ten years in vain war's dreadful chance was tried, 135
 And with French blood, the plains of France were dy'd ;
 When Medicis, who daily saw renew'd,
 The forces which she daily thought subdu'd ;
 Weary of conquests which her hope deceiv'd,
 In her dark soul, a horrid plan conceiv'd ; 140
 To trust no longer war's uncertain fate,
 But with one blow her thirsty vengeance sate.
 Favours and flattery her projects veil'd,
 And peace was offer'd us, when war had fail'd.
 What peace, just Heav'n, whose vengeance I implore ! 145
 What bloody fruit the treach'rous olive bore ;
 Is it, O God ! for monarchs, from the throne
 To lead their subjects on to crimes unknown ?

But Coligny, his king's, his country's friend,
 Whose good in civil arms was all his end ; 150
 Anxious to see their long misfortunes cease,
 Too fondly grasp'd this faithless lure of peace.

Suspicion seldom haunts a noble mind,
 With gen'rous confidence his foes he join'd ;
 Too young for thought, secure in his support, 155
 And guided by his care, I sought the court.

The

The queen receiv'd me with a long embrace,
 While tears of well-feign'd joy bedew'd her face ;
 On me she lavish'd all a mother's care,
 With him appear'd her inmost thought to share. 160
 Profuse of honours, and in flatt'ry school'd,
 Her councils seem'd by his opinions rul'd ;
 Drawn by the promis'd favours of her son,
 Our friends deceiv'd, by brilliant hopes she won.

This gleam of sunshine was, alas ! but short, 165
 While some, who better knew the faithless court,
 Dreaded its smiles---not easy to detect,
 The king could feign, still more than they suspect ;
 For Medicis in secret form'd his heart

To ev'ry treacherous ev'ry cruel art : 170
 Too prone to vice, his easy nature caught
 At once th' envenom'd doctrines which she taught ;
 Pity and shame were banish'd from his soul,
 And vice possess'd it all without controul.

With deeper guile th' infernal plot to weave, 275
 His sister's (13) hand he plighted, to deceive.
 A brother's love his smiling lips profess'd,
 A brother's love receiv'd him to my breast.

Insidious name ! vain friendship which we swore,
 The first dire presage of our fate you bore ; 180
 The same pale torch diffus'd its dismal gloom
 On these sad nuptials, and my mother's tomb !
 Let not my tongue, betray'd by grief or hate,
 To Medicis impute her early fate ;

Surmises, e'en well founded, I disclaim, 185
 Nor need suspicion vilify that name ;
 Death clos'd my mother's eyes !—forgive the tear
 Which mem'ry calls for, at a name so dear.

The hour (14) came round appointed by the queen,
 All stood prepar'd to close the bloody scene, 190
 The sickly moon refus'd her trembling light,
 And more than common darkness veil'd the night ;
 Silence and sleep on weary nature hung,
 Thro' the still air the hollow signal rung.

Secure in virtue Coligny repos'd, 195
 His watchful lids, sleep unsuspecting clos'd.
 Sudden at once a thousand hideous cries
 Break his soft slumbers :—sudden to his eyes
 A thousand horrid shapes of murder rise !
 His palace blazing thro' the glowing air, 200
 And arms and torches cast a sullen glare.

Welt'ring in blood, his murder'd servants lie,
 Their panting limbs the dusky flames supply ;
 From ev'ry side the furious rabble pour,
 Wild for their prey, in savage sounds they roar : 205
 Spare none !—spare none !—'Tis God directs our hand,
 The king and Medicis their blood demand.

Nearer and louder as they swarm around,
 Their bursting peals of death his name resound ;
 Expiring, dragg'd o'er heaps of victims slain, 210
 Young Teligny (15) implores his aid in vain !

His

His age's hope, his daughter's hapless choice,

He sees him fall, and hears his dying voice.

Ill-fated youth ! for this did early fame

Adorn the honours of thy ancient name ;

215

For this his daughter, Coligny bestow,

And love and honour in thy bosom glow ?

Unarm'd, unaided, but for ever great,

Calmly he view'd his own impending fate ;

Resolv'd, tho' none avenge him, none defend,

220

Glory, which grac'd his life, shall grace his end.

His palace now th' assassin band possess,

Now on the portal of his chamber press ;

This feeble barrier he himself withdrew,

And stood majestic in the ruffians' view ;

225

Unmov'd, serene, as on th' embattled plain

I've seen him urge the combat, or restrain :

Struck, with the godlike grandeur of the man,

Unusual awe thro' every bosom ran ;

Their harden'd souls were melted by his look,

230

And fury, for a time, their breast forsook.

" Why," cries the hero, " why your work suspend ?

Let this grey head beneath your daggers bend ;

Strike, I forgive the blow, no vengeance fear,

Strike, and you'll find a generous heart is here !

235

The blood which war has spar'd, old age has chill'd,

Oh ! that for you, these ling'ring drops were spill'd."

His words at once their bloody purpose stopp'd,

Down from their trembling hands their poignards dropp'd,

Tears fill their eyes, around his knees they cling, 240
Like duteous subjects round an honour'd king ;
The hero, 'midst his murderers, appear'd
A monarch in his court by all rever'd.
But Bêsmé (16), their leader, thund'ring from below,
Amaz'd for once, to find their daggers slow, 245
Rush'd furious on, indignant as he found
His fiends unarm'd and prostrate on the ground ;
Perfect in guilt, fit agent for the queen,
Inflexible, he view'd the moving scene ;
'Twere crime, 'twere weakness, 'twere his first remorse, 250
Could his fierce spirit yield to pity's force :
In sounds of death, their dastard souls he curst,
And thro' their trembling ranks like lightning burst ;
But still the hero's calm, majestic look,
In nature's spite, his hellish temper shook ; 255
His awful brow unable to withstand,
He turn'd aside, and, with uncertain hand,
Buried his bloody dagger in his breast !
Of all our heroes thus expir'd the best.
Nor did his death their deep revenge assuage, 260
His mangled corps, must glut their barb'rous rage.
On the bare plain an headless trunk it lay,
To birds and prowling dogs a common prey !
Charles and his court, delighted with the show,
Inhal'd the odour of a slaughter'd foe ; 265
The hoary head from the cold body torn,
The gift of Charles, to Medicis was borne ;
And

And rais'd in triumph, ghastly, pale and grim,

A triumph worthy her, and worthy him :

She with cold apathy the face survey'd,

270

No sign of pleasure, or remorse, betray'd ;

As one to whom such gifts were nothing new,

So close the curtain of her mind she drew.

Vain were the task to count the heaps of dead,

Or tell, what blood that guilty night was shed ;

275

For Coligny's sad fate, did but presage

The boundless circuit of their growing rage.

Fire in their eyes, and daggers in their hands,

Inflam'd by zeal, urg'd by their king's commands,

Trampling our dying friends beneath their feet,

280

Millions of murd'ers swarm'd in ev'ry street.

To swell the slaughter, lurking vengeance came,

And private murder took a public name.

Guise at their head (17), with tenfold vengeance paid

This bloody tribute to his father's shade.

285

Foremost (18) Nevers, Gondy, Tavannes appear,

Goad on tir'd havoc in his dread career,

Fast, as they kill, new lists of death impart,

And guide their poignards to their victims' heart.

But who can paint what dire confusion reign'd,

290

What waves of blood the streets of Paris stain'd ;

What piercing shrieks were heard, what dying groans :

Torn from her breast, and dash'd upon the stones,

The mother, dying, mourn'd her infant dead !

Sons o'er their fathers' bleeding bodies bled !

295

Men,

Men, children, women, perish'd ; sex nor age,
 Beauty nor innocence, escap'd their rage !
 Reckless alike for what, or whom, they kill,
 'Twas cause sufficient they had blood to spill :
 Death at a bound at once on thousands rush'd, 300
 Consum'd, or in the flaming ruins crush'd !
 Such scenes, which mortal fury still displays,
 Mark the dire track where flaming passion strays,
 And blot man's annals from his earliest days. }
 But what ne'er enter'd in those lists of crimes, 305
 What Fate reserv'd for our devoted times,
 By frantic priests the pious monsters led,
 Call'd God to witness all the blood they shed :
 On altars of the slain his name invok'd,
 Where, mix'd with human blood, their horrid incense smok'd ! 310
 Hence let mankind this awful lesson feel,
 Dread the foul spirit of fanatic zeal ;
 And curse the men, on pow'r or gain intent,
 Whose hell-born arts those deadly feuds foment :
 Imbitt'ring ev'ry source of human woe, 315
 Pouring despair from whence our hope should flow.
 O then what chiefs were hurried to the tomb :
 Renel and Pardaillan (19), unworthy doom !
 Wise Lavardin (20) thy prudence could not save,
 Nor Guerchy's valour snatch him from the grave. 320
 Amidst the victims which that night of woe
 Sunk to the realms of endless night below,

Soubise and Marsillac (21) with fate contend,
 And bravely, but in vain, their lives defend ;
 Till wounded, fainting, struggling still for breath, 325
 Before the Louvre's (22) gate they sink in death ;
 Their dying voice in vain their king implor'd,
 Ev'n at his feet, life's gushing stream they pour'd.

At leisure Medicis enjoy'd the sight,
 She, with her minions, from the Louvre's height 330
 Guided and urg'd the murd'rer's hand below,
 And smil'd to see the bloody torrent flow :
 On ev'ry side, in rapture as she gaz'd,
 Wide spreading flames, to light her triumph, blaz'd.

But worse than all—O deed of horrid shame, 335
 A foul assassin too, the king (23) became !
 'Twas not enough to give the dire command,
 In his own subjects blood, he steep'd his sacred hand !

He too, Valois, the king I serve to-day,
 In whose defence your aid I suppliant pray, 340
 He too, did in th' infernal plot engage,
 He more than shar'd his wretched brother's rage.
 Yet is not Valois' heart of feeling stript,
 Seldom in guiltless blood his hands were dipt ;
 By vice surrounded, easy, feeble, young, 345
 His very cruelty from weakness sprung.

Some few, indeed, surviv'd the gen'ral lot,
 Not that the murd'ers spar'd them, but forgot ;
 How Caumont's (24) tender years escap'd their rage,
 With wonder will be told thro' ev'ry age. 350

Between

Between two sons, the sire, with years opprest,
 Stretch'd on one couch, enjoy'd the sweets of rest,
 Eager to kill, rash fury for their guide,
 Blindly their daggers struck on ev'ry side ;
 Their blows repeated, hasty rage misled,
 And death uncertain, hover'd round the bed.

355

Too often ready at our rash command,
 A pow'r invisible restrain'd his hand :
 'Tis God alone, prolongs our days or ends,
 On him, and not on man, our fate depends :
 Caumont unhurt escapes their thousand blows,
 A second life a father's love bestows ;
 Spread o'er his darling child, his heart receiv'd
 Their erring poignards, and their rage deceiv'd.

360

Meanwhile of plighted faith, alas ! too sure,
 Midst all these crimes, unguarded and secure,
 Far in the palace from the hostile sound,
 My languid sense, in balmy sleep was drown'd.
 Gods ! what a scene those treach'rous slumbers broke !
 To what dread sights of horror I awoke :
 The dawning light, my murder'd servants shew'd,
 With fuming blood the royal mansion flow'd ;
 Close by my couch, I saw th' assassin stand,
 The reeking dagger lifted in his hand !
 The period of my hapless fate was come,
 Already I advanc'd to meet my doom.

365

370

375

Whether some feeling for their sov'reign's race,
 Still in their harden'd bosoms found a place ;

Whether

Whether the queen, refin'd in malice, thought
 Death for her enemies too mild a lot, 380
 And with false mercy vengeance to ally,
 Those whom she hated most forbade to die ;
 Or that in me, her prudence would oppose
 A future hostage to avenging foes ;
 The life her cautious hatred bade her spare, 385
 In servile bondage I was doom'd to bear.

Thrice happy Coligny ! from dastard chains
 Snatch'd by thy better fate, thy fame remains ;
 Blest was thy doom, of life alone bereft,
 Unsullied by thy fall, thy glory left. 390

I see your blood, the tale of horror chills,
 Your royal breast indignant passion fills.
 Deeper and wider still, the torrent spread :
 You've still to hear, what seas of blood they shed !
 It seem'd at once, that from the Louvre's gate 395
 The knell of murder toll'd thro' all the state.
 To deeds of blood, when monarchs bend their mind,
 What prompt obedient ministers they find !
 Too well, like Paris, all the realm obey'd (25),
 Death, unrestrain'd, o'er all the country prey'd ; 400
 Our rivers, choak'd with carnage, swell'd with blood,
 To frighted ocean roll'd a crimson flood.



N O T E S

TO

CANTO II.

(1) **PRESUMPTUOUS** to decide.] Henry IV. has been represented by many historians as sincerely undecided between the two religions. He was at this time a Calvinist, but if he sought for truth with the candid zeal of an honest man, guided only by the light of human reason, and averse as he is here described to persecution and to deceit, the conduct of both parties must have staggered his belief in either.

(2) The two chiefs of Guise's line.] Francis, then commonly styled the Great Duke of Guise, father to the Duke surnamed the Balafre (or the Scar'd), whom Henry III. murdered at Blois. He and his brother the cardinal, laid the first foundation of the League. He was possessed of many great qualities, which we should take care not to confound with good ones. That great historian De Thou says, that this Francis De Guise wished to have Anthony of Navarre, father to Henry IV. murdered in the chamber of the King of France, Francis II. and had actually prevailed upon the young and weak monarch to consent to this crime. The mind of Anthony de Bourbon was weak and unsteady; he was not destitute of courage and greatness of soul. Informed of the plot against his life, he did not hesitate to enter the chamber where he knew he was to be murdered. "If they do kill me," he said to Reinsy, one of his gentlemen, "carry my bloody shirt to my son and to my wife; they will know how to revenge my death." The young king, shuddering at the guilt of such an action, withdrew his consent, and the Duke of Guise was heard to say in retiring from the presence-chamber, "What a poor king we have!"

(3) The mind of Medicis.] Great grand-daughter to Lorenzo de Medicis, chief of the Florentine Republic, surnamed the Great, and the father of literature. Of the origin of this house authors speak differently: some pretend, and Brantome follows them, that, when Brennus, a French general, overran Italy and Greece, he had in his army two French gentlemen, called Felonius and Bono, who suspecting Brennus of a design of pillaging the temple of Delphos, withdrew from him with all their forces, and penetrated into Asia as far as Medea. As they were returning through Italy to France, Felonius stopped on the banks of the river Arno. Struck with their resemblance to some of the spots which he had conquered in Medea, he built a city there, which is now called Florence, and his companion Bono gave his name to a city still called Bologna or Bononia. Felonius, from his great exploits in Medea got the surname of Medicus, whence the house of Medicis. Such is the romance of the family, but it is pretended that this is its history:—It descends, they say, from a collier, who made his son an apothecary, Medico in Italian, whence their name and arms, which are balls or pills. They never would allow this origin, and the world would not believe the other. See "Discours merveilleux de la Vie, Actions et Deportemens, de la Reyne Catherine de Medicis," British Museum. It is hardly possible to give a better idea of the mind of Catherine de Medicis than Voltaire has here done. As to her person it was majestic and elegant, though her head was rather too large; her features were beautiful, her neck and breast unrivalled, her complexion uncommonly fine, her eyes large and animated. These charms, which were heightened by all the art of dress, did not fade with her youth, but lasted even to old age, though she grew rather large and corpulent. Her legs were remarkably well shaped, and she is said to have introduced the fashion of riding on a side-saddle to show one of them to greater advantage. Her reign forms an epocha in the history of politeness. She gave to the French court that character of elegance, gallantry, luxury, and perhaps of corruption, which it never afterwards lost. She possessed the most undaunted courage, of which she gave frequent proofs to the astonishment of the oldest soldiers. She was born April 13, 1519, of Lorenzo de Medicis, Duke of Urbino, and Madame De la Tour d'Auvergne, and seems from her birth to have been destined to an extraordinary fate. Her childhood was exposed to the greatest dangers from the animosity of the Florentines at that time against the house of Medicis. Baptisto de Cei proposed to have her exposed on the walls of the town to the fire of the Austrian batteries; Bernardo Castiglioni to deliver her up to the lust of the soldiery. After being the wife of one king and the mother of three, and occasioning during many years the misery and devastation of France, she died at Blois in 1589, aged 71, loaded with debts. The death of this princess,

whose

whose life had been so remarkable, was almost unnoticed. So died the Dutchess of Angoulesme, mother to Francis I. So have died many other turbulent and intriguing women; "as if," says that excellent historian, the President Hainault, "Heaven took a pleasure in obliterating the memory of the ambitious."

(4) Her husband, snatch'd] Henry II. killed at Paris, 10th July 1559, in a tournament, by Montgomery, the splinter of whose lance entered his right eye, in the 41st year of his age and the 12th of his reign. The diversions of those days consisted in an ostentatious display of vigour and dexterity. A Turkish envoy at one of those tournaments, which seldom ended without some misfortune, very sensibly remarked, that if the combatants were in earnest, it was not enough; if they were in play, it was too much. Montgomery was executed, more in the spirit of revenge than of justice, in 1574, under Henry III; "a warning," says De Thou, "that even accident is accounted criminal when it falls on a crowned head." His children were degraded from their rank; the father in his last moments cried out, "I consent to that part of the sentence, if they have not virtue to raise them in spite of it." His name was unlucky; another Montgomery wounded Francis I. dangerously in the head in playing with him.

(5) The second Francis.] His character cannot be better given than in the poem. He was the husband of Mary Queen of Scotland, and died at Orleans in 1560, at the age of 18. When party spirit runs high it is hard for any conspicuous person to die without the suspicion of violence. It was said a Scotch Huguenot valet de chambre poisoned him by the part of his night-cap, which answered to a fistula which he had in his ear.

(6) Still younger Charles.] Charles IX. born 1550, came to the throne 1560. His character and dreadful death are finely painted in the 2d and 3d Cantos. Catherine saw three of her sons upon the throne of France; Francis II. Charles IX. Henry III.

(7) Dreux first beheld.] The battle of Dreux in 1562 was the first pitched battle between the Protestants and Catholics. In the beginning of the day the Protestants were victorious; when Catherine heard it she very quietly said, "Then we must say our prayers in French."

(8) Great

(8) Great Montmorency fell.] Anne de Montmorency, the most obstinate and inflexible man, and the most unfortunate general of his time. Stuart, a Scotchman, who had made him prisoner at the battle of Dreux, killed him at that of St. Denis. He had already received four wounds in the face and one very deep one in the head with a battle axe; he was rallying his troops when Stuart rode up and levelled his pistol at his head. "Don't you know me?" he cried, "I am the constable of France." "Very well," answered Stuart, "this is the proof of it," and discharged his pistol in his shoulder. As he fell he dashed the hilt of his sword into Stuart's mouth, broke his teeth and fractured his jaw. He died next day with great composure aged near 80.

Stuart, under Francis II. acquitted himself of the murder of Minard, a magistrate active against the Protestants, by undergoing the torture with the utmost fortitude. He was afterwards taken at the battle of Jarnac and killed in cold blood by the Marquis de Villars, in the presence of the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry III.

(9) Guise, unworthy such a death.] Francis, Duke of Guise, already mentioned in the notes of Canto I. famous for the defence of Metz against Charles V. He was besieging the Protestants in Orleans in 1563, when Poltrot de Mere, a gentleman of Angoulesme, shot him in the back with a pistol charged with three poisoned balls. He died at the age of 44, covered with glory and regretted by his party.

(10) My hapless father.] Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, father of the most determined and intrepid man who ever lived, was himself the weakest and most irresolute. He was a Huguenot, and his wife a Catholic, but they both changed their religion much about the same time. Jane Dalbret, his wife, always continued an obstinate Protestant; but Anthony was always wavering in his opinions, and it is still doubtful in which he died. He served Medicis whom he hated, against the Protestants whom he loved. He aspired to the regency at the death of Francis II. "I know," said Catherine to him, "that you pretend to the government during the minority of my son; give me this instant a promise under your hand that you will not accept the regency in case it should be offered to you by the States." Anthony obeyed, and signed his own disgrace. He was killed in 1562, at the siege of Rouen, aged 44.

(11) Condé who loved in me.] This prince of Condé was brother to Anthony, King of Navarre, and uncle to Henry IV. He was long at the head of the Protestant party,

party, the inveterate enemy of the Guises, and was killed after the battle of Jarnac by Montesquiou, captain of the Duke of Anjou's guards. Henry IV. was at that battle, and, though but fourteen years old, remarked the faults by which it was lost. On that day the Prince of Condé had one arm already disabled and in a sling. As he rode to the charge, his brother-in-law the Comte de la Rochefoucault's horse reared and broke his leg. No ways affected by this accident, he said calmly to those about him, "Remember, gentlemen, that these fiery horses do much more harm than good in an army. The prince of Condé, since he has you with him, does not fear to give battle with a broken leg and an arm in a sling." He instantly charged; his horse was killed under him, but he defended himself on one knee, covered with wounds, till he was taken prisoner by Tison d'Argence. A moment after, says Brantome, rode up a very gallant and honourable gentleman called Montesquiou, asked his name, instantly cried out, "Kill him, by all means kill him!" and shot him through the head. After the action the Duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry III. by whose order it is supposed Montesquiou killed him, wished to enjoy the sight of his body. It was thrown across an ass, the head and legs hanging down, and kept that night in the room under that in which the Duke of Anjou slept. His person was little and hump-backed, but he was full of wit and gallantry, and a great favourite of the ladies.

No general was ever so much beloved by his soldiers. His German auxiliaries murmuring for their pay, he once proposed to his own troops to give them theirs, to which they readily consented.

(12) Coligny.] Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France, son of Gaspard, Maréchal of France, and Louisa de Montmorency, sister to the constable, born at Châtillon, the 16th February 1516. After the death of the prince of Condé he was declared chief of the Protestants in France. Catherine and Charles IX. enticed him to the court for the marriage of Henry IV. to Marguerite de Valois, sister to Charles and Henry III. He was murdered on St. Bartholomew's day, and was the chief object of their vengeance. The circumstances of his death were exactly those mentioned in the poem. The words, *Strike, and you'll find a generous heart is here*, were those of the gallant Cossé, Duke de Brissac, murdered nearly in the same manner at Versailles in September 1793. After receiving many wounds, he laid his hand on his heart, and cried firmly to his assassins, "*Strike here, voici le cœur de Brissac*"—Here you'll find Brissac's heart. He preserved the elevated sentiments of ancient chivalry in all their purity; he was the true model of a French gentleman. Attached to his king with the noblest spirit of independence, he never quitted his side from the first moment

moment of his misfortunes, till he was dragged from it some days previous to the 10th of August 1793. Those who have known France as I have done, and who find in this work (if it has any readers) many melancholy traits of resemblance with our present unhappy days, will easily forgive me this digression, this triste indulgence, in the remembrance of times of which nothing now but a hopeless wreck remains.

The admiral's body was treated with every species of wanton indignity. The Protestants say, that the head was sent to Rome by the queen; certain it is, that it was presented to her, with a box full of papers containing the history of his times written by his own hand. The populace dragged the headless corpse through the streets, and hung it by a chain to a gibbet at Montfaucon. The king and his court went there to enjoy this horrid sight: some of the company remarking that the body smelt ill, Charles, in the words and spirit of Vitellius, answered, "The body of a dead enemy always smells well." Coligny lodged in a house still to be seen in the Rue de Betizy, which was in Voltaire's time L'Hotel de St. Pierre, where his chamber was shewn.

A monied man of our times, bought an estate which had belonged to Coligny, where he found a box, a few feet under ground, full of papers. They were not good on 'Change, and he threw them into the fire.

The admiral's daughter, widow to Teligny, who also was murdered, married the Prince of Orange, great grandfather to William III. of England.

(13) His sister's hand.] Margaret of Valois, daughter of Henry II. and Catherine of Medicis, born May 14, 1552. The enthusiasm of Brantome's style in speaking of this princess is extraordinary. "To proclaim her beauty, her talents and her virtues, God must extend the bounds of this world, and raise the vault of Heaven; in our narrow sphere, the fame of her perfection has not room to expatiate." In another place, "I believe," he says, "the finest months of the finest spring, are not more fertile in painted flowers and verdant herbs, than every season of the life of this princess, in various and exalted subjects for the pen of panegyric."—After reciting many uncommon instances of the effect of her charms, upon men of every country, he describes the grandeur of her person, the majestic gracefulness of her air, the commanding and at the same time languishing and voluptuous expression of her dark eyes, the flowing ringlets of her sable hair; at last the old gentleman almost forgets himself and his readers, in the glowing picture which he draws of her bosom: "So white, so full, so round, so killiagly displayed to view, that the gentlemen of the court, almost expired at the sight. I have seen her ladies, those whom she particularly favoured, by her

her permission cover it with rapturous kisses." Such was the court of Catherine. After expatiating in this flighty manner on the charms of her person, and minutely describing the taste and elegance of her dress, he proceeds to those of her mind, which were not less captivating. Sensible, witty, eloquent, graceful, lively in her conversation, mild and engaging in her temper, mistress of every pleasing and every solid accomplishment of her time. She answered the Bishop of Cracow's Latin address in the most pleasing style of ready elocution; her letters, her discourses, her common conversation, were models of eloquence. What a pity that so near to such perfection were the faults from which perhaps it sprung. Her beauteous form inspired passion; her ardent imagination, to which she owed the graces of her mind, made her romantically susceptible of it. Her conduct unfortunately was not exempt from reproach, either before or after her marriage with Henry IV. Passionately enamoured, and secretly engaged with his greatest enemy, the Duke of Guise, who possessed superior attractions in the eyes of the ladies, she gave her hand to the King of Navarre, with undisguised reluctance. But ever after she had given it she nobly refused to consent to any measure to his disadvantage, and saved his life at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which took place only six days after their marriage, his name having been put down by Catherine in the red list (*le papier rouge*). The remainder of her life after her divorce from Henry, to procure which he published the most secret and disgraceful transactions of her life, was spent in study, retirement and neglect.

(14) The hour came round.] It was in the middle of the night between the 22d and 23d of August 1572, that this bloody tragedy was acted. The signal was given by the ringing of a bell at the Louvre or Royal Palace, and repeated with great regularity through all the town, suburbs and neighbourhood, till it spread into the remotest provinces.

(15) Young Teligny.] The Count de Teligny had married the admiral's daughter a few months before. His countenance was so handsome, and so strongly expressive of mildness, that it quite disarmed the first assassins who came to put him to death; but others were not wanting.

(16) Bêsmé.] A German, a servant or a page in the house of Guise. This wretch was afterwards taken by the Protestants. The people of La Rochelle offered a large sum to have him quartered in their town. He was killed by a man of the

name of Bretonville. De Thou says the admiral exclaimed, when he was wounded by Bésme, "It would have been some satisfaction to have fallen by the hands of a gentleman, but not by a miserable servant!"

(17) Guise at their head.] Henry, Duke of Guise, son to Francis the great Duke; he was surnamed the Balafre, from the scar of a wound which he received in the face by a pistol-shot near Chateau Thierry. It was he who ordered the barricades round the palace of Henry III. by whose command he was afterwards murdered at Blois.

(18) Nevers, Gondy, Tavannes.] Frederic of Gonzagna, of the house of Mantua, duke of Nevers, one of the authors of the massacre. Albert de Gondy, Mareschal de Retz, favourite of Medicis. This family, which acquired so much power in France, and seems formed for intrigue, descended from a miller about five miles from Florence. This Mareschal de Retz, who retired to the family mill, during the civil war of the League, was Charles's master in the art of dissimulation. His father was a bankrupt at Lyons, his mother's profession was not quite so reputable; but in the way of business she became acquainted with Henry II. and Charles IX. "This Mareschal," says Brantome, from whom this note is collected, "was a most abominable swearer and blasphemer, in cool blood; to be sure, he adds, the gallant Cipierre, the king's governor, did also swear sometimes, but always like a gentleman *en cavalier*."

Gaspard de Tavannes had been page to Francis. He ran through the streets that night, crying out—"Bleed! bleed! Bleeding is as wholesome in August as in May." His son, who has left some memoirs of those times, says, that his father made a general confession on his death-bed. His confessor asking him with astonishment, why he said nothing of the part he had taken in the massacre? "I look upon that," says the mareschal, "as a meritorious action which will efface many of my other sins!"

(19) Renel and Pardaillan.] Anthony de Clermont Renel, was killed as he endeavoured to escape in his shirt, by the Baron des Ardres and his own cousin Bussy D'Amboise. The Marquis de Pardaillan was killed by his side.

(20) Guerchy and Lavardin.] Guerchy made a gallant defence in the street, but fell overpowered by numbers, after killing many of them. Le Marquis de Lavardin had not time to draw his sword.

(21) Soubise

(21) Soubise and Marsillac.] Marsillac, Count de la Rochefoucault, was a favourite of Charles IX. and had passed part of that very night with him. The king had some wish to save him, and bid him sleep in the Louvre; but at length let him go, saying, "I see 'tis the will of God." He refused to sleep in the king's room because he thought the king wished only to whip him and play tricks on him in the night. When Chicot, the king's fool, knocked at his door to let in the murderers, he cried, "I know 'tis the king come to whip me, but I am prepared, he shall not catch me."——Soubise, so called from his marriage with the heiress of that house; his name was Dupont Quellenec. He sold his life dearly, and fell, covered with wounds, under the queen's windows. The ladies of her court went to examine his naked and bloody body from particular motives of a barbarous and licentious curiosity worthy of that dissolute court.

(22) The Louvre's gate.] The Louvre was the residence of the French king, and is taken frequently for a palace in general.

(23) The king became.] Voltaire says he heard the last Mareschal de Tessé say, that he had known in his youth an old man of ninety who had been page to Charles IX. and who repeatedly assured him that he himself had charged the carbine with which the king fired that night upon the Protestants.

(24) Caumont.] The famous Mareschal de La Force, who afterwards acquired so great a reputation, and lived to the age of ninety-four. The account he himself gives of his preservation in his manuscript memoirs differs from that given by Mezeray in his History of France, which Voltaire has followed only in the circumstance of his father and elder brother being murdered by his side in the street and not in their bed. Here are his own words, they are very interesting:—"Two days before the massacre the king had sent orders to the parliament to set at liberty an officer who was imprisoned in the Conciergerie. The parliament not obeying, the king dispatched his guards to break open the prison and liberate the prisoner. The next day the parliament waited on the king to remonstrate against this proceeding. All the members of it affected to wear their arms in a sling, to intimate that the king, by that act of violence, had wounded and maimed the arm of justice. This transaction made a great noise, and in the beginning of the massacre the Huguenots were made to believe that the tumult was occasioned by an insurrection of the people on that account. A horse-dealer who saw the Duke of Guise and some of the ruffians enter the house of the

Admiral de Coligny, and witnessed in the crowd the murder of that nobleman, ran instantly to give advice of it to the Sieur Caumont de La Force, to whom he had sold ten horses a week before. La Force, his two sons, and many other Protestants, lodged in the Fauxbourg St. Germain. There was at that time no bridge between the Fauxbourgs and the town. The court had given orders to have all the boats seized for the use of the assassins. The horse-dealer swam across and gave Mons. de La Force notice of the danger which threatened him. La Force had already quitted his house and might have saved himself, but finding his children did not follow him, he went back for them, and had scarce reached his house before the assassins were in it with a man of the name of Martin at their head; they entered his apartment, disarmed him and his children, and with horrid imprecations bid them prepare for death. La Force offered Martin a ransom of two thousand crowns, which he accepted; La Force swore it should be paid in two days, and the assassins, after pillaging the house, told him and his children to put their handkerchiefs in the form of a cross over their hats, and tuck up the sleeves of their right arms up to the shoulders. This was the distinctive mark of the murderers. In this situation they took them across the river into the town. The mareschal says that the river was covered with dead bodies; he and his father and brother landed opposite the Louvre; there they saw many of their friends murdered, among others the brave De Piles, father of him who killed Malherbe's son in a duel. Captain Martin then brought his prisoners to his house, Rue des Petits Champs, made them swear that they would not stir out till the two thousand crowns were paid, placed a guard of two Swiss soldiers over them, and set off to massacre more Calvinists. One of the Swiss out of compassion offered the prisoners to help them to escape; La Force would not listen to him, he had given his word and would rather die than break it. His aunt furnished the money, and he was going to give it to Captain Martin, when the Count de Coconas (the very same who was afterwards beheaded) came to tell La Force, that the Duke of Anjou wished to speak to him: upon which the father and the two children came down, bareheaded and without their cloaks. La Force soon perceived that he was going to his death, and following Coconas, beseeched him to spare his two innocent children. The youngest, called Jacques Nomparr, who was only thirteen years old, and who gives this account, raised his voice and reproached the murderers with their crimes, assuring them that they would be punished by God. Meanwhile the father and the two children were brought to the end of the *Rue des Petits Champs*; the eldest first received several wounds of a poignard, and cried out, "Oh, my father! Oh, my God! I'm dead!" In the same instant the father fell, pierced with wounds, upon the body of the son. The youngest, who

who was covered with their blood, but who had miraculously escaped their daggers, had the presence of mind to cry out also, "I am dead!" and threw himself down between his father and brother, whose last sighs he received. The murderers, thinking them all dead, went off, saying, "We have done for them all three." Some wretches came to strip the bodies; young La Force had still a linen stocking left, which tempted a marker of the tennis court of Verdelet; in pulling it off, he fixed his eyes on the body of the child, and cried out, "Alas! 'tis a great pity, this is but a child, what could he have done!" These words of compassion engaged the young La Force to raise his head softly and whisper "I am not yet dead." The poor man answered, "Don't stir, my child, have patience." Towards night he came for him, and said, "Get up, they are gone," and put an old cloak over his shoulders. As he was leading him off, one of the executioners asked him, "What boy is that?" "'Tis my nephew," says he, "who has got drunk, see what a figure he has made of himself, I am going to correct him." At last the poor marker got him to his house, and asked thirty crowns for his recompence. From his house the child got himself conducted, disguised as a beggar, to the arsenal, to his relation the Mareschal de Biron, Grand Master of the Artillery. They hid him for some time in the women's apartment, but hearing that the court was seeking him to put him to death, he effected his escape in the dress of a page, under the name of Baupuy."

Henry IV. was more than once heard to say publicly, that after the massacre a sight of crows perched upon the Louvre, and during seven nights the king and all the court heard dreadful cries and lamentation always at the same hour. He spoke also of a more singular prodigy: he said that, some days before the massacres, while he was playing at dice with the Duke of Alençon and the Duke of Guise, he saw drops of blood upon the table; that twice he had them wiped off; that twice they returned; and that he quitted the table with horror.

(25) All the realm obey'd.] The names of those virtuous men who did not obey this unjust and cruel order, can never be too often repeated. Jeanin, the Marquis de St. Herem, the Counts De Tendes and De Charni; Messrs. De Tanegin, Le Veneur, De Gordes, De Villeneuve de Vaucluse, De Mandelot, D'Ortes, De Matignon, and others whose names ought not to be forgotten.



ARGU-

ARGUMENT.

HENRY continues the history of the civil wars of France. The dreadful end of Charles IX. Reign of Henry III. and his character. That of the Duke of Guise the *Balafré*. Battle of Coutras. Character and death of Joyeuse. Murder of the Duke of Guise. Misfortunes of Henry III. Mayne becomes chief of the League. D'Aumale the hero of it. Reconciliation of Henry III. and Bourbon. Queen Elizabeth's answer to Henry. Character of Philip II. Of Pope Sextus V. Essex commands the English sent against the League.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO III.

“ FATE gave the rein, and Death, without controul,
Rang’d on, till slaughter cloy’d the murd’rer’s soul,
Or from his hand the blunted dagger dropt,
Or dearth of victims, sated carnage stopt : . 5
The people then, whose minds the queen misled,
Look’d down with horror on the blood they’d shed.
Pity with them to senseless rage is near,
Their country’s mournful accents reach’d their ear.
The king himself (1) the scene disgusted view’d,
And swift remorse, his haunted soul pursu’d. 10
In vain the queen, with deep infernal art,
Eras’d the stamp of nature from his heart !
A soul like hers, so steel’d to guilt and shame,
Surpass’d the art of hell itself to frame !
Still was the goading voice of conscience heard, 15
That secret judge, by proudest tyrants fear’d ;
I To

To sorrow and to shame, an early prey,
 He felt the canker'd bud of life decay ;
 His faded cheek the hand of God betray'd,
 His days were number'd, his offences weigh'd. 20
 A dread example thro' all future times,
 For kings—who dare to imitate his crimes !
 I saw him die ! and still before my eyes,
 The horrors of that dreadful scene arise ;
 Through ev'ry pore his oozing blood distill'd, 25
 Aveng'd the blood of France, his rage had spill'd.
 A hand unseen impell'd him to his doom,
 His end diffus'd an universal gloom.
 The people mourn'd their king, his crimes excus'd,
 Crimes of weak youth, by wicked arts abus'd ; 30
 And still to hope inclin'd, in his remorse,
 Of future virtue, view'd a fruitful source.
 Soon as his brother's wretched fate was known,
 Valois (2), impatient, darted on the throne ;
 Swift as the whirlwind from the north he rush'd, 35
 To seize the spoils which still with slaughter blush'd.
 More fear'd than mighty kings, his young renown
 Gain'd ev'ry suffrage for Jagellon's crown.
 But early fame is oft a dang'rous boon,
 Valois the glory lost he gain'd too soon. 40
 My sov'reign's sacred cause demands my sword,
 But truth, more sacred, still directs my word.
 My arm, my life, Valois may freely use,
 To 'venge his wrongs, but not his faults excuse.

His

His glory (3), like a transient meteor shone, 45
 And all the splendour of his youth was gone.
 This contrast oft the lives of monarchs yield,
 Slaves on the throne, and heroes in the field !
 Doubtful the glory which the camp bestows,
 'Tis strength of mind, superior greatness shows ; 50
 What virtues Heav'n in Valois' bosom plac'd,
 Had more a soldier than a monarch grac'd :
 Brave, but unsteady, by his fav'rites sway'd,
 Their will corrupt, his wav'ring mind obey'd.
 Th' officious, flatt'ring herd was ever near, 55
 To drive the voice of mis'ry from his ear.
 His pow'r was theirs, their vile caprice was law,
 Her squander'd treasures France indignant saw ;
 Vain were the tears her ruin'd children shed,
 Their labours still his pamper'd minions fed. 60
 While Valois thus, by vice and weakness chain'd,
 Th' improv'ish'd state, with growing taxes drain'd ;
 Guise (4), like the orient beam which gilds the cloud,
 With dazzling lustre fix'd th' inconstant crowd.
 His valour, his exploits, his father's fame, 65
 His grace, his beauty, the resistless claim
 The pow'r of pleasing, which subdues the mind,
 And more than virtue triumphs o'er mankind,
 The world enchanted to his party drew :
 None more than he that dang'rous science knew, 70
 None with more art a specious veil could throw,
 And wrap his close designs in outward show.

Master of ev'ry impulse in his mind,
 His passion sway'd, but where his will design'd ;
 Imperious, proud, but knowing how to bend 75
 And court the lowest, for his fav'rite end :
 The people's burdens ever first to blame,
 Their wants, their suff'rings, were his constant theme ;
 To seek out timid indigence his care,
 Relieve its mis'ry, and its blushes spare : 80
 First in each gen'rous act his name appear'd,
 To those he hated most, the great, endear'd.
 Rash in his projects, in his measures wise,
 Foreseeing danger only to despise ;
 Great in his vices, in his virtues great, 85
 Useful at once, and dang'rous to the state.
 When for a time, he'd plied these flatt'ring arts,
 To root his int'rest in their fickle hearts ;
 Sure of his strength, he cast aside the veil,
 And dar'd, without disguise, the throne assail. 90
 The League, which soon o'er all the kingdom spread,
 Beneath his fost'ring care, first rear'd its head ;
 Fertile in tyrants, and with blood replete,
 Nurs'd by the people, cherish'd by the great.
 Beneath two sov'reigns then our country groan'd, 95
 One the vain trappings of a monarch own'd ;
 The other, strong in real pow'r and fame,
 Seem'd to despise a king's degraded name.
 The tempest thick'ning now on ev'ry side,
 The League's increasing strength, its tow'ring pride, 100
 The

The danger near, at length arous'd, Valois
 Woke from his trance, his wretched state he saw ;
 But to the light his feeble eyes unus'd,
 Beheld the danger, dazzled and confus'd ;
 Sick of the sight, again their lids he clos'd, 105
 Again, upon the verge of ruin doz'd.
 His fav'rites lull'd him in his treach'rous rest,
 And hid the perils which around him prest.
 I still remain'd, and I remain'd alone,
 To save the monarch tott'ring on his throne : 110
 To me that throne was destin'd to descend ;
 My sword its rights was ready to defend.
 Resolv'd his dangers and his fate to share,
 My arm was rais'd a needful aid to bear.
 But still to wisdom blind, Valois disdain'd 115
 The means of safety, which alone remain'd.
 For Guise, too deeply skill'd in arts of state,
 Felt all his greatness in our mutual hate ;
 Once more religion's hackney'd veil he took,
 Of faction and intrigue, that common cloak ; 120
 With specious virtues on the people work'd,
 And fann'd the flame which in their bosom lurk'd,
 Shew'd them the God their ancestors ador'd,
 Rail'd at the sect their pious zeal abhor'd.
 The dangers of their church with ardor trac'd, 125
 And me, among its foes, the foremost plac'd.
 " Behold," he cried, " how far his error spreads,
 See how the path of Britain's queen he treads ;
 Soon

Soon must our shrines be levell'd with the ground,
Our sacred domes with heresy resound !” 130

Thus was the crowd's religious zeal abus'd,
Thus to the throne, the false alarm diffus'd ;
The League, for Heav'n affected most to fear,
And Rome, still prompt, its faction's voice to hear ;
Then thunder'd forth its insolent decree, 135
That, Rome forbade the king to treat with me.

Weak and deceiv'd, the hapless prince obey'd ;
His brother, for his artful foes, betray'd,
To war against his interest blindly led,
His troops unwilling o'er the land he spread. 140

Reduc'd to combat, whom I came to save,
I saw his weakness, pitied and forgave.
The League meanwhile, its hundred towns alarm'd,
And from their teeming bosoms armies swarm'd.
The king's caprice, too ready to obey, 145

Joyeuse (5) impetuous, mark'd me for his prey,
While Guise, alike in camps and councils vers'd,
Scatter'd my gath'ring force, my friends dispers'd.
With dangers thus inclos'd on ev'ry side,
I stood undaunted, and the storm defied ; 150

On Coutra's plains, I met my haughty foe :
That day's event, his hapless end, you know ;
Fame to the world has spread his dismal fate,
What's so well known, 'twere needless to relate.”

“ Let not by modesty,” the queen replied, 155
“ What's due to fame and valour be denied ;

No,

No, no! that great eventful scene impart,
 Each word instructs my mind, affects my heart;
 The dangers, labours, glory of the day,
 How Joyeuse fell, and how you triumph'd, say;
 They best can tell such actions who perform,
 And they deserve to hear, whose breast they warm."

160

A rising blush o'erspread the hero's cheek
 To hear his praise.—Forc'd with regret to speak
 His own exploits, obedient to the queen,
 Thus he began to paint the mighty scene.

165

"Of all the fav'rites whose insidious art
 Sooth'd Valois' weakness, and usurp'd his heart,
 Joyeuse, whose noble blood all France rever'd,
 The least unworthy of his rank appear'd.
 Heav'n in his breast the seeds of virtue sow'd,
 And had not fate his early blossom mow'd,
 Doubtless his soul, to noble actions train'd,
 The height of Guise's glory had attain'd;
 But nurs'd in luxury, by love engross'd,
 In courts voluptuous his best days were lost.
 Unbounded courage only, he possess'd,
 A dang'rous virtue in a youthful breast.

170

175

With him his courtiers, minions of his state,
 Rous'd from the lap of pleasure, rush'd on fate;
 A thousand cyphers of their fair one's names,
 In mystic knots proclaim'd their am'rous flames.
 Diamonds and gold upon their armour blaz'd,
 And deck'd the swords the gaudy warriors rais'd.

180

Ardent,

Ardent, tumultuous, and in fields untaught, 185
 Their fierce presumption to the camp they brought ;
 Proud of their riches, of their numbers vain,
 Onward they dart, and rules of war disdain.

Far other pomp my vet'ran troops display'd,
 Steady, and silent, in their ranks array'd ; 190
 Inur'd to blood, to toil and danger steel'd,
 Their stern battalions frown'd upon the field ;
 Not gold, but iron, beam'd on ev'ry side,
 Their arms their ornament, their wounds their pride :
 Clad like themselves in steel, and at their head, 195
 Their dusty squadrons to the charge I lead ;
 My sole distinction to be foremost plac'd,
 Like them a thousand different deaths I fac'd.

I saw the bending legions of our foes,
 Broken, dispers'd, and shrinking from our blows. 200
 My sword reluctant in their blood imbru'd,
 The haughty Spaniard better had pursu'd.

This truth demands : of all that courtly band,
 Mow'd in their prime by death's unpitying hand,
 None fell but by an honourable wound, 205
 To glory true, and steady to their ground ;
 Scorning a life by coward flight disgrac'd,
 Calmly inevitable death they fac'd.

Such are the spirits which our court compose,
 Their temper bends not in its soft repose. 210
 Luxurious flatt'ers there, but in the field,
 Their ease, their pleasures, to their glory yield.

Amid

Amid the dire confusion of the plain,
 My orders were to spare Joyeuse. In vain:
 Languid, and cold with death's approaching shade 215
 I saw him in his soldiers' arms convey'd;
 Faintly to earth hung down his drooping head,
 His eye was faded and his colour fled.
 Thus the fair flow'r which morning's glist'ning tear,
 And zephyr's fragrant kisses, fondly rear, 220
 A moment blooms,—but in its gaudy prime,
 Yields to the scythe, and fades before its time.

When the foul deeds of civil strife we trace,
 Valour's a crime, and victory disgrace;
 Perish that monument that dares proclaim 225
 The victor's triumph, with his country's shame!
 Perish each monument of civil arms! (6)
 Bath'd in my country's tears, what laurel charms?
 My sword in Gallic blood reluctant stain'd,
 Blushes for ev'ry conquest it has gain'd. 230

By this day's loss, Valois, still more involv'd,
 To struggle with impending fate, resolv'd;
 But scorn and insult follow'd each reverse,
 Paris grew bolder, and the League more fierce,
 While Guise's glory blazing in his face, 235
 Made victory appear like new disgrace:
 For Guise, triumphant, to Joyeuse's shade
 Of our allies a bloody off'ring made,
 At Auneau (7) too, my German friends o'erthrown,
 Paris its saviour view'd, in Guise alone. 240

Valois was witness to his rival's fame,
 When flush'd with conquest, to the town he came ;
 And seem'd exulting in his sov'reign's woe,
 To triumph over him—and not his foe.
 The stings of shame the dullest minds provoke, 245
 This last affront Valois' resentment woke ;
 Rous'd from his stupor by a subject's pride,
 The scepter's force, too late, the monarch tried.
 Too late, alas ! no more his realm obey'd,
 Nor led by duty, nor by terror sway'd ; 250
 Too long disus'd sedition to restrain,
 He seem'd a tyrant when he wish'd to reign.
 Meetings and plots are form'd, and false alarms,
 The town's a camp, the people rise in arms ;
 A thousand ramparts springing from the ground, 255
 Menace the monarch, and his guard surround.
 Guise (8) like the genius of the tempest reign'd,
 Now rais'd their fury, now their rage restrain'd ;
 Rul'd raving anarchy with sov'reign sway,
 And bade the raging mass his voice obey ; 260
 Th' impetuous torrent burst the palace gate,
 And Guise stands master of his master's fate ;
 One look decided Valois' fatal hour,
 But Guise seem'd satisfy'd to shew his pow'r.
 Forward himself their fury to restrain, 265
 He let the rival fly, he might have slain !
 Thus did he dare, whatever end he sought,
 Less than usurper, more than subject ought :

The man who dares above his king to soar,
 Ventures too much, unless he venture more. 270
 This day's attempt confirm'd his tow'ring mind,
 He felt he'd gone too far to look behind;
 And from the giddy height to which he'd flown,
 Saw but one choice, a scaffold or a throne.
 Presumptuous hope his glowing bosom fill'd, 275
 Whate'er he wish'd, the rebel nation will'd;
 Rais'd by his brothers, seconded by Rome,
 By Spain assisted, and ador'd at home;
 Those shameful scenes (9) his heated mind retrac'd,
 Which our first race of sluggard kings disgrac'd, 280
 Who from their birth unsuited for the crown,
 Conceal'd their shame beneath a monkish gown;
 With secret anguish, in their cloister mourn'd
 Their power by tyrants seiz'd, their throne o'erturn'd.
 Meanwhile Valois, in whose fermenting breast 285
 Lurk'd deep revenge, and hatred unexpress'd,
 At Blois the council of the realm conven'd,
 Those states where laws were made, but not maintain'd;
 Where many an orator, of words profuse,
 Describ'd, not remedies, the state's abuse. 290
 Such numerous counsellors around the throne,
 Serve not to mend, but make misfortune known.

Guise in this senate, with usurping pride,
 Next to his king in place, his pow'r defied,
 Sure of his creatures, bold in their support, 295
 He seem'd the monarch of some servile court,

And to their tyrant true, the venal band,
 Prepar'd to raise him to supreme command.
 Then Valois' soul, inflam'd with fierce disdain,
 Conceiv'd the project to revenge and reign. 300
 Th' insulting subject, now no more disguis'd,
 Smil'd at his anger, and his pow'r despis'd;
 Nor fear'd with vain contempt, a soul so weak
 Could dare a crime, and from its bondage break;
 Blindly the scornful prince provok'd his fate, 305
 And fell (10) beneath the injur'd monarch's hate:
 Valois stood witness of th' unkingly deed,
 Gor'd with dishonest wounds, he saw him bleed;
 His spirit threat'ning with his latest breath,
 In stern defiance fix'd his brow in death; 310
 Still darting terror thro' his rival's breast,
 The ghastly corpse the haughty soul exprest.
 Thus fell this mighty subject, in whose mind,
 Virtue's pure ray, with dazzling vice combin'd;
 The king, from whom the kingly pow'r he tore, 315
 Meanly resented, what he meanly bore.

Soon to the town the bloody rumour spread,
 And all was sorrow, and revenge, and dread;
 Thro' ev'ry age and sex, wild clamour rung,
 Around his statues in despair they hung; 320
 Their father's blood in vengeful accents spoke,
 Their injur'd church their furious zeal awoke;
 And Guise's brother (11) all their passions stir'd:
 More by ambition than resentment spurr'd,

He

Hé spread the dire contagion thro' the land,
And urg'd to desp'rate deeds the frantic band.

325

Mayne, by his brother early train'd to arms,
Cradled in war, and nurs'd by dread alarms,
Heir to his vast ambition, and his fame,
The rebel sceptre was the next to claim ;
That lawless sway, long-wish'd for, now possess'd,
Soon chas'd a brother's image from his breast ;
Less ardent, while repugnant he obey'd,
To serve him living, than revenge him dead.

330

In Mayne, I own, heroic courage shines,
A thousand jarring parties he combines ;
With sense superior, rules the motley crew,
False to their king, but to their tyrant true ;
Knows each one's talent, turns it to his ends,
And e'en misfortune to his purpose bends ;
Bright with transcendent lustre, Guise appear'd
A hero more, but not more justly fear'd.

335

340

Such is the chief they've chosen for their guide ;
But in his prudence, if the League confide,
Tis young D'Aumale (12), the martial soul inspires,
Breathes spirit thro' their ranks, their bosom fires.
D'Aumale the party's boast, in early youth
Is nam'd invincible, and nam'd with truth.
Mayne's steady wisdom shapes his rapid course,
One their directing mind, and one their force.

345

350

Meanwhile the prince, who rules by foul deceit,
With bigot zeal, insidious guile replete ;

Beneath

Beneath whose sceptre wretched Flanders bends,
 Philip (13), whose hatred to us both extends ;
 Allied with Mayne, deserts our sov'reign cause, 355
 The rebel aids, against his king and laws.
 Her peaceful charge, perverted Rome betrays,
 Whirls discord's brand aloft, and spreads the blaze.
 He that a father's name so falsely bears,
 The poison'd weapon for his son prepares ; 360
 Misfortune swell'd from ev'ry baleful source,
 On wretched Paris pour'd its gather'd force.
 By foes surrounded, by his subjects spurn'd,
 To me at length, Valois defenceless, turn'd ;
 He judg'd my heart, nor is his hope deceiv'd, 365
 Long for my country's fate, this heart has griev'd ;
 All my own wrongs and dangers now forgot,
 A brother's safety is my only thought ;
 Honour and duty all my soul inflame,
 For kings on kings possess a sacred claim ! 370
 No hard condition (14) with his wants I made,
 Safety in courage only, I display'd ;
 And there, I cried, within that rebel wall,
 Valois must triumph or must greatly fall.
 Starting from pleasure and ignoble ease, 375
 His slothful weakness with disgust he sees :
 No merit from the glorious change I claim,
 His soul, misfortune rais'd and gen'rous shame ;
 His easy mind requir'd those powerful stings,
 The best and surest counsellors of kings." 380
 The

The hero paus'd, and ending his discourse,
 Sued once again for aid, from Britain's force :
 Fir'd with his words, a thousand youths prepare
 To brave the ocean, and his dangers share ;
 Essex, their chief, whose prompt impetuous hand,
 Not all Iberia's prudence could withstand ;
 Presumptuous youth, unconscious to what end
 The smiles of fortune and of sov'reigns tend.

385

Henry precedes, impatient of delay,
 The thought of glory wings his rapid way ;
 Victory soaring o'er the rebel walls,
 Back to the field her fav'rite hero calls.

390

" Go," says the queen, " pursue your glorious fate,
 Soon shall my warriors round your standard wait ;
 My friendship trusts them to your gen'rous care,
 Not Valois' fortunes, but Bourbon's, they share.
 Instruct them in the labours of the field,
 Such lessons more than pay, what aid they yield :
 Train'd by your mighty deeds the martial band,
 Will learn from you to serve their native land.
 Go ; may the League expire beneath your sword,
 Tho' Spain and Rome their treach'rous aid afford ;
 Let Spain your vengeance feel ; your lofty soul
 Disdains the thunders Rome affects to roll :
 Go, gen'rous chief, and freedom's cause maintain,
 Let Sixtus rave, and Philip plot in vain !

395

400

405

In artful Charles a hero's virtues shone,
 The son his crafty soul receiv'd alone ;

By

By partial feuds, to universal sway,
Th' intriguing tyrant meditates his way. 410

The lowly offspring of Ancona's plains (15),
With less of pow'r, but more ambition, reigns :
The shepherd's boy, o'er monarchs would presume,
And reign at Paris as he reigns at Rome.
His past'ral staff, with Philip's sceptre vies, 415
His triple crown the diadem defies ;
With cautious violence, and fraud innate,
Prompt to oppress the weak, insult the great ;
Still do his treach'rous arts the world persuade,
My distant court his dark intrigues pervade : 420
These are the pow'rs your valour must subdue,
Once enemies to me, as now to you.

By British arms and angry billows check'd,
Spain mourns her hope, her proud Armada wreck'd ;
Old Ocean at her mighty ruin smil'd, 425
Who dar'd dispute his empire, with his child !
Sextus, constrain'd my sceptre to revere,
No longer threats what we no longer fear.
In their defiance be your plan pursu'd,
Rome will be silent when the League's subdu'd ; 430
Her love, her hatred, on yourself depends,
She spurns the conquer'd, to the conqu'ror bends ;
Damns or absolves, as pow'r and fortune guide ;
"Tis yours to raise, or bid the storm subside."





NOTES

re

CANTO III.

(1) **THE** king himself.] Charles was cruel rather from weakness than ferocity. His pliant soul was moulded into vice by Catherine and her favourite the Florentine, Gondy Mareschal de Retz. After the massacre he asked his courtiers with an air of exultation, if he had not played his part well. "Am I not worthy of the school of my great grandfather Lewis XI?" He assisted at the execution of Briquemaret and Cabagnes, and had torches placed round the scaffold to observe their countenances as they died. But shame and remorse soon preying on his spirits, his strength decayed, and lingering two years after the massacre, he died on the 30th of May 1574, in the 23d year of his age and the 13th of his reign, bathed in his blood, which oozed out through all his pores. Catherine was not on good terms with her son for some time before his death; he reproached her once with a vehement oath, of being the cause of all his trouble. When he was expiring he was going to say more, but his mother in the most earnest manner stopped him, "*Ne le dites pas, Monsieur,*" "Do not say it, Sir." "I ought to say it," he replied, "for it is true;" but he was silent, and died soon after.

(2) Valois impatient.] See Note (3), Canto I.

(3) His glory like a transient meteor.] Mariana says, that there was not more difference between Hector victorious over Patroclus, and Hector dragged at the wheels of the chariot of Achilles, than between the Duke of Anjou in the field of Montcontour, and Henry III, surrounded by his minions and forced from Paris by the Duke de Guise.

L

(4) Guide.

(4) Guise.] Henry de Guise, surnamed the Balafre (or the Scar'd), born in 1550, of Francis the great Duke of Guise and Anne of Est. He put into execution the plan of the League, laid at the time of the Council of Trent by the Cardinal of Lorraine his uncle, and begun by his father. This Duke of Guise had acquired a brilliant reputation, possessed more great than good qualities, and seemed born to change the fate of his country.

(5) Joyeuse.] Anne, Duke of Joyeuse, married to the king's sister-in-law, a princess of Lorraine. This marriage was celebrated by Henry with the most ostentatious profusion. He was treated in his embassy to Rome as the king's brother. His sentiments were not below his fortunes: having one day kept the secretaries of state waiting in the king's antichamber, he made them the most polite excuses, and gave up to them ten thousand pounds which the king had just given him. He commanded at the battle of Coutras against Henry IV. King of Navarre, 20th October 1587. His army was compared to that of Darius, and Henry's to Alexander's. He was killed in that battle by two captains of infantry named Bordeaux and Descentiers.

(6) Perish each monument of civil arms.] The Grecian republics allowed no triumph to their generals for victories obtained over a Grecian people. The Romans, still more magnanimous, in the good times of the republic, never raised a monument of their victory, even over barbarous nations. Florus mentions the first instance as a novelty of degenerate pride:

"Quum hic mos inusitatus fuerit nostris: nunquam enim populus Romanus hostibus demitis victoriam suam exprobavit."

Florus, Cap. II. Lib. III.

"It never had been the custom of the Roman people to reproach the conquered with their victory."

What a pity that, 'midst a magnanimous people both in England and Ireland, this spirit has not survived!

(7) Auneau.] At the same time that the king's army was beaten at Coutras, the Duke of Guise obtained a signal advantage over the German auxiliaries of Henry at the village of Auneau.

(8) Guise in the hurricane unmov'd.] Guise, who had returned to Paris, invited by the League, but in direct opposition to the orders of Henry III. after surrounding the

the king and his guards in the palace, was satisfied with disarming them and sending them out of Paris.

(9) Those shameful scenes.] The Cardinal de Guise said more than once, that he could not rest satisfied till he had held the king's head between his knees, to exchange his crown for a monkish tonsure. Madame de Montpensier, sister to the Guises, insisted that he should use her scissors for this holy purpose.

(10) And fell beneath the monarch's hate.] He was murdered in the king's anti-chamber and in his presence, in the castle of Blois, Friday, 23d December 1558, at eight o'clock in the morning. He had passed the night with a lady of the court (tradition says, Madame de Noirmontier), and on entering the room was near fainting from weakness. All those who have given an account of his death say, that as soon as he came into the council-room he suspected what was going to happen by the bustle which he perceived. His confidant, D'Espignac, Archbishop of Lyons, told him in the hearing of L'Archant, captain of the guard, pointing to a new dress which the duke had on, "This coat is rather light for the season, you should have put on something thicker." These words confirmed the duke's suspicions. He went forward nevertheless through a narrow gallery leading to a closet, the door of which the king had walled up. The duke, not knowing it, raised the hangings in order to pass through; at that instant Montsivry gave him the first blow; La Bastide, St. Malin, St. Gaudin, St. Capantel, Halfrenne, Herbelade, and many others of the guard, called the forty-five, with Lognac their captain at their head, fell upon him at once. Guise had often been warned of the king's intention, but always answered, "The king's mind is too weak for such an act; he will never dare do it." The brother of the Duke, the Cardinal de Guise, shared the same fate the day after. He was still more violent and ambitious. Henry III. feared the resentment of Pope Sixtus V. not for the murder of the duke, who was but a layman and not particularly under the protection of his holiness, but for the imprisonment of the cardinal, the Archbishop of Lyons, and the old Cardinal de Bourbon, whom he had ordered to be secured, and whom the Pope looked upon as his subjects more than Henry's. Cardinal Morisini, the legate, not having expressed the indignation of his master as violently as Sixtus felt it, the king, the day after the murder of the duke, ventured upon that of the cardinal. He proposed the execution of it to forty-five different persons, who all refused to obey his orders: at length Du Gast, a captain in the guards, ordered the soldiers of

his company to put him to death. This officer, at day-break on the eve of Christmas-day 1588, entered the apartment where the Cardinal de Guise and the Archbishop of Lyons were confined and in expectation of their fate, for which they had prepared themselves by confessing and receiving absolution from each other. Du Gast ordered the archbishop to follow him and appear before the king. The cardinal, persuaded they were leading him to execution, said to him, "My lord archbishop, recommend your soul to God." The archbishop answered, "My lord, do you the same." Du Gast then told the cardinal he was to die instantly. The unhappy prince begged a few moments to prepare for death, knelt, and, after a short prayer, covering, like Cæsar, his face with the long skirt of his gown, cried out with a very resolute voice, "Sir, execute when you please your master's orders." Upon which four soldiers killed him with their lances. This action of the king's produced the same effect in the League as the massacre had done in the Protestant party. The death of the leaders gave a new spirit to the faction.

(11) Guise's brother.] The Duke of Mayne, a man of an ambitious and intrepid mind, possessing more talents than activity, found himself unexpectedly at the head of a powerful faction, beginning to feel its own consequence, and animated by revenge and fanaticism.

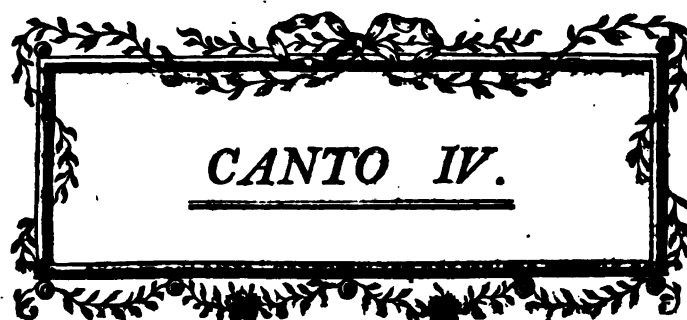
(12) Young D'Aumale.] The Chevalier D'Aumale, brother to the Duke D'Aumale, of the house of Lorraine; a young man of an impetuous spirit, possessed of many brilliant qualities, who was constantly at the head of the sallies during the siege of Paris, and who breathed spirit and vigour into the League.

(13) Philip.] Philip II. King of Spain, son to the emperor Charles V. He was called the Evil Spirit of the South, because from this Southern kingdom of Spain he disturbed all Europe—*Demonium meridianum*. He sent powerful succours to the League, in hopes, it is said, to obtain the crown of France for his daughter the Infanta Clara Eugenia, for whom his attachment is well known.

(14) No hard condition.] Henry IV. then King of Navarre, had the generosity to go to Tours to meet Henry III. attended only by one page, notwithstanding the fears and remonstrances of his old officers, who never lost the remembrance of St. Bartholomew's day.

(15) The

(15) The lowly offspring of Ancona's plains.] Sextus V. born in a village called *The Grets*, in the Marche d'Ancône, of a poor labourer of the name of Peretti, a man whose violence was equal to his dissimulation. While he was in the convent of the Cordeliers he beat most desperately the nephew of his superior, and quarrelled with the whole order. He was taken into their society out of charity by one of their priests, to whom he had shown his way across the country where he was keeping pigs, and who was struck with the acuteness of his understanding at so early an age. It was he, when he was cardinal, who composed the famous bull of excommunication issued by Pius V. against Queen Elizabeth, for whose abilities he, notwithstanding, always entertained the highest respect, and constantly spoke of her as *un gran cervello di principessa*.



ARGUMENT.

D'AUMALE is on the point of making himself master of Valois' camp, when Bourbon, returning from England, engages the troops of the League, and regains the day.—**DISCORD** snatches D'Aumale from the sword of his foes, and flies for succour to Rome. Description of Rome and character of Sextus V. Discord meets Policy in Rome. Returns with her to Paris and corrupts the Sorbonne. Animates the Sixteen against the parliament and arms the monks. The magistrates who retain their allegiance to their king perish on the scaffold. Dreadful troubles and confusion in Paris.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO IV.

WHILE they, their kingly subject thus pursu'd,
Revolving ev'ry scheme of public good,
With ev'ry art by deepest wisdom plann'd,
Mankind to combat, conquer and command ;
Seine mourn'd—her silver current stain'd with blood, 5
The rebel ensign waving o'er her flood.

Anxious, uncertain, far from Henry's aid,
The various turns of war, the king dismay'd ;
His wav'ring mind requir'd a steady guide,
His only hope on Bourbon's arm rely'd. 10

The League, whose spirit in his absence grew,
Without the walls their force embolden'd drew ;
D'Aumale, presumptuous youth, Nemours, Brissac,
Daring St. Pol, La Chatre, Canillac,
With valour blasted by the cause they chose, 15
In rapid strides on trembling Valois close :

M

He,

He, by each new event inconstant sway'd,

Regretted now that Henry had obey'd.

'Midst those who first the rebel standard rear'd,

Foremost a brother of Joyeuse (1) appear'd :

20

He that by starts, from courts to cloisters turn'd,

Now blaz'd in armour, now in sackcloth mourn'd :

This day his God blasphem'd, the next implor'd,

And now the cross embrac'd, and now the sword.

Apostate now, with rage remorseless flames,

25

The altar's sacred ministry disclaims,

Inspires the League, and steeps in civil blood

Th' anointed hand, devoted to his God !

But of the chiefs in that detested cause,

Whose valour, spite of virtue, forc'd applause,

30

'Twas you, D'Aumale, vain-glorious youth, 'twas you

Whose guilty greatness Europe's wonder drew.

Lorraine's proud blood, which in your bosom swell'd,

Still against kings, and laws, and peace, rebell'd :

Restless, unceasing, ever in the field,

35

Boldly by day, in silent night conceal'd,

The foremost of the daring youth he led,

And death and devastation round him spread :

Thus from the top of Caucasus, or where

From Athos brow, the view is lost in air,

40

The tyrant of the feather'd tribe descends,

Or his prone flight the famish'd vulture bends,

With headlong fury wheeling thro' the skies,

Drops on his prey with shrill exulting cries,

The

The struggling captive, in his pounces bears, 45
 And 'midst his native cliffs, his victim tears.
 Buoy'd with rash hope, and giddy with his fame,
 To Valois' tent the youth audacious came;
 Night lent the bold attempt her sable screen,
 Full on the camp the torrent burst unseen; 50
 Surprise and darkness swell'd the dread alarm,
 Death unresisted darted from his arm;
 Fear and confusion ran from tent to tent,
 And sure destruction follow'd as they went.
 As morning quench'd the faded lamps of night, 55
 Henry approach'd, and thro' the dawning light,
 Mornay preceding, saw the town appear,
 When sounds of desolation struck his ear.
 Valois' defeat the rising sun reveal'd,
 E'en Bourbon's troops were scatter'd o'er the field: 60
 "Heavens! is it thus my friends their chief receive,
 Is this," he cries, "the welcome which you give!
 See Bourbon comes—but comes to see you fly!"
 Jove was, at Rome, the heart-inspiring cry;
 The Stator's name their fainting souls restor'd, 65
 When on their broken rear the Sabines pour'd;
 But Bourbon's name decides the fate of France,
 Rouz'd by the sound, they rally and advance;
 Scarce had they turn'd, when at their head he stands,
 Back to the charge he leads th' astonish'd bands; 70
 Swift as the flash which thro' the tempest flies,
 Death in his hand, and fury in his eyes.

The flying rebels vanish from his sight,
 Like stars extinguish'd by approaching light.
 In vain D'Aumale th' unequal fight renews,
 In vain they rally, Bourbon's sword pursues :
 In vain their leader's well-known voice they hear,
 Like thunder bursting on their scatter'd rear,
 The cry of Bourbon chills their souls with fear.
 D'Aumale himself is forc'd at length to yield,
 Borne in their flight reluctant from the field ;
 As some vast fragment from the mountain's brow,
 Rolls down with mould'ring earth and yielding snow.

75

}

80

Now scornful fury in his bosom burns,
 Again upon th' advancing foe he turns ;
 Disdaining life, the purchase of disgrace,
 Resolv'd, alone, his destiny to face,
 And 'midst their thickest ranks with glory fall ;
 But Discord saw, and trembled for D'Aumale .
 Swift to his aid the haggard fury sped,
 'Twixt him and Fate, her iron buckler spread ;
 That vast impenetrable shield, that darts
 Fury and fear alike, thro' human hearts.
 Daughter of Hell, inexorable pest !
 Snatching one man from death, to scourge the rest ;
 That bloody hand, to ev'ry crime inur'd,
 Which ne'er before a mortal's anguish cur'd,
 Clos'd his deep wounds, recall'd his flitting life,
 And fondly nurs'd the hope of future strife.

85

90

95

But

But while your care the ebbing stream restor'd,
Your poison'd spirit thro' his veins you pour'd. 100

Thus treach'rous tyrants, in their lust of pow'r,
Protract the guilty wretch's fatal hour,
Long as his crimes can serve their dark design,
Then to his fate the useless wretch resign. 105

As wise to use success, as bold to gain,
Now Henry spreads his squadrons round the plain,
And dire assault protending to his foes,
Foreboding lines around their ramparts close.
Valois' reviving soul the chief inspir'd, 110
The troops once more their king's example fir'd,
Rous'd to the pleasures, toil and danger yield,
He shares the risks and labours of the field.

Fortune at length their union seem'd to crown ;
Pale terror hov'ring o'er the guilty town, 115
To all the rebel ranks proclaim'd their fate,
And shew'd the monarchs thund'ring at their gate.

Mayne's mighty soul itself, sees no resource,
A weak, dishearten'd crowd is all his force ;
Widows and orphans cries his ear assail, 120

Parents their slaughter'd sons tumultuous wail,
And ask the blood his curs'd ambition shed :
All is disunion, discontent and dread !
Weak and irresolute his council's voice,
To fly or to submit, their coward choice : 125

None to resist, in rabble souls so near
Presumptuous rashness and degrading fear.

Their

Their mean resolves the chief indignant heard,
 His soul a thousand diff'rent projects shar'd, 130
 When hissing snakes her dread approach proclaim'd,
 And Discord thus in horrid sounds exclaim'd:
 " O ! worthy offspring of the name you bear,
 That name, which France with terror still shall hear,
 Whose youth I nurs'd, who grew beneath my laws, 135
 Whom vengeance joins in this our common cause,
 Hear what your mother and your friend advise:
 The senseless crowd's uncertain will, despise,
 Each chance of war their dastard hearts may chill,
 But mine's their soul, I mould it as I will. 140
 Soon shall you see them fierce with Discord's sting,
 Back to our ranks, with wonted fury spring,
 With madness combat, and with transport fall,
 As thro' their boiling veins I pour my gall."
 She said, and flash'd like lightning thro' the skies, 145
 But still on France, delighted, turn'd her eyes.
 Carnage and Famine hail'd her as she pass'd,
 Her murky pinions spread a parching blast,
 The noxious vapour which her breath distill'd, 150
 Blighted the smiling promise of the field,
 The tender blossom bow'd its drooping head,
 The wither'd ear hung o'er the furrow—dead :
 Mephetic clouds obscur'd the face of day,
 The sick'ning stars withdrew their pallid ray, 155
 And peals of boding thunder mark'd her way!

Borne on a whirlwind o'er the plains she scours
 Where princely Po his rapid torrent pours,
 On Rome at last her haggard eyes inclin'd,
 Her temple once, the terror of mankind, 160
 Rome, proudly destin'd from her earliest birth,
 By force or fraud, the mistress of the earth :
 Her eagles first the bloody sway maintain'd,
 The world she conquer'd, and its monarchs chain'd ,
 A milder system now her pow'r extends, 165
 Beneath her laws, the willing monarch bends,
 She rules the mind, the yielding bosom charms,
 Her councils are commands, decrees her arms.

That Capitol, to peace so long unknown,
 A peaceful pontiff views on Cæsar's throne, 170
 That throne an altar, and together giv'n,
 The sceptre of the earth, the keys of heav'n.

Where vengeful Mars (2) his pompous ruin shows,
 Where thousand heroes mix'd with earth repose,
 Unwarlike priests the tranquil spot possess, 175
 Headless, stern Cato's dust, or Scipio's, press.

Here God himself his infant church ordain'd,
 With rage rejected, or with zeal maintain'd ;
 Her first apostles here, each virtue brought,
 And heav'nly truth with simple candour taught ; 180
 Who follow'd next, pursu'd their modest plan,
 Respected most, when least they sought from man ;
 Their doctrine humble poverty profess'd,
 No pompous diadem their temples press'd,

A martyr's

A martyr's wreath, their whole ambition crown'd, 185
 A Christian's virtues all the wealth they own'd.
 But time, that renders all that's human worse,
 Gave pow'r to priests, and to the world a curse :
 Rome from that hour with ev'ry vice profan'd,
 With impious councils, guilty state maintain'd, 190
 And murder, poison, treachery, support
 The novel grandeur of her monstrous court :
 Rank incest and adult'ry bare their face,
 'Midst Christ's successors, in his holy place ;
 Rome, in despair beneath their odious rod, 195
 Regrets her idols, and disclaims their God.
 In happier days a milder plan prevail'd,
 Less frequent were her crimes, or better veil'd,
 'Twixt church and people certain bounds appear'd,
 Kings now respected Rome, no longer fear'd ; 200
 Beneath that crown in threefold honours bound,
 E'en modest virtue's self again was found ;
 Then policy became Rome's greatest art,
 To know and profit of the human heart.
 Sextus (3) then rul'd the church and Roman state. 205
 If to be false, austere, and fear'd, be great,
 Sextus may claim that title for his own.
 To many an artful year he ow'd his throne ;
 His vices, virtues, talents, all conceal'd,
 His soul in false humanity he veil'd, 210
 And seem'd to fly the rank he burn'd to gain.
 To him deep Policy transfers her reign.

Mean

Mean Av'rice, fierce Ambition, gave her birth,
 With Fraud, and Flattery, she curs'd the earth.
 False fiend ! in smiles and careless semblance drest, 215
 Tho' Care's sharp fangs are rankling in her breast :
 Sleep never clos'd her haggard, lidless eyes,
 Her fever'd brain engend'ring new disguise,
 With some new trick the dazzled world deceives :
 So well to Fraud, Truth's lovely form she gives, 220
 That God's own seal to foul Deceit she lends,
 Perverting Heav'n itself to gain her ends.

When Discord, well known fury, met her view,
 With looks mysterious to her arms she flew ;
 A flatt'ring smile her pliant features took, 225
 That ready smile, that gilds the courtier's look ;
 But real sorrow soon her face o'ercast,
 " Alas !" she cried, " these happy days are past,
 When timid Europe, curb'd beneath my rod,
 Obey'd my mandates as the voice of God : 230
 I spoke, and kings, descending from their seat,
 Mix'd with the crowd, and bow'd beneath my feet ;
 Then from the Vatican my thunders hurl'd,
 Spread war and ruin o'er a prostrate world ;
 While I, sole arbitress of life and death, 235
 Made and unmade its sov'reigns with a breath !
 Those days are past ! The Gallic senate (4) wrench
 My thunders from my hands, my lightnings quench ;
 Inflam'd with zeal for God, contempt for me,
 They bid enlighten'd man his errors see ; 240

First from my face, my fair disguise they tore,
 And gave to truth, her semblance which I wore !
 What pow'r forbids us, in our common cause,
 To gain these wary guardians of the laws ?
 Once more let vengeance all our force unite,
 Let Discord's breath my smould'ring torches light ;
 From ruin'd France our power again may spread,
 And earth once more, Intrigue and Discord dread !"

245

Far from the pride of Rome, the pomp of courts,
 And sacred domes, where Vanity resorts,

250

Whose splendid air this universe deceives ;
 In deserts hid, Religion humbly lives :
 There, while her name, by impious man abus'd,
 The tool of state, the tyrant's cloak, is us'd,

The people's dread, the great one's secret scorn,
 She, peaceful maid, for patient suff'ring born,
 With pardon in her eyes, her God implores,
 And on her foes a silent blessing pours.

255

Artless, undeck'd, in native beauty bright,
 Her modest charms ne'er bless'd their worldly sight,
 Who selfish views with sacred forms combine,
 And worship Fortune, on Religion's shrine.

260

Her soul, for Henry, purest love inflam'd,
 The gen'rous hero for her son she claim'd,
 And saw, with ardent hope in future days,

265

His pious hand, her ruin'd temples raise.
 Discord and crafty Policy surprise
 Their heav'nly foe, while she, with streaming eyes,

Look'd

Look'd up to God: but God, to try her heart;
 Left her the victim of their hellish art; 270
 Still from such foes to suffer is her doom,
 Her modest veil th' infernal pair assume;
 Wrap their foul forms in her respected dress,
 And brooding dark designs, to Paris press.
 Intrigue, with smiles and soft engaging grace, 275
 In Sorbonne's ancient hall usurps her place;
 There met those sages, by the world rever'd,
 Who sacred truth, unmix'd, to man declar'd:
 At once their country and their church maintain'd,
 By weakness, or by error, yet unstain'd. 280
 But rarely man in virtue perseveres;
 So soft, the monster's voice, invades their ears;
 In different tones, to different minds address,
 Her fair suggestions shook their yielding breast,
 Th' ambitious soul, the pointed crown betray'd, 285
 And sordid Av'rice was in secret paid.
 Fear o'er the weak, her dire infection threw,
 Unmiss'd by Truth, the timid herd withdrew;
 Lur'd by the soothing accents of applause
 Some nobler spirits fell, from virtue's cause! 290
 Tumult the council call'd, and Tumult led;
 Truth hear'd the uproar, dropt a tear and fled!
 Then thro' the hall, this dreadful judgment rings,
 "The church creates, absolves, chastises kings;
 Her power the church confides to us alone; 295
 Loos'd be the oaths (5) which bound us to the throne,
 Valois, no more thy sov'reign sway we own."

Scarce were the words pronounc'd, when, trac'd in blood;
 By Discord's hand, the horrid sentence stood.
 From church to church, with rapid flight she scour'd, 300
 Thro' ev'ry factious ear those accents pour'd;
 In shape of monks and friars, her poison'd tongue
 From pulpits echo'd, and thro' cloysters rung.
 Round her their pale inhabitants she drew,
 Of willing sufferers a ghastly crew. 305
 " My sons, Religion's sacred features own,"
 Exclaim'd the fiend; " avenge th' Almighty's throne!
 Religion's voice you hear, and God's command,
 The sword of vengeance sparkles in my hand;
 Seize it, my sons, let solitude conceal 310
 No more the transports of your glowing zeal;
 No more by words but by example preach,
 To wav'ring France that healing precept teach;
 To kill her sov'reign is to serve her God!
 Display the path which Israel's leaders trod. 315
 What fix'd the priestly power in Levi's race?
 What gave the favour'd tribe that envied place?
 'Twas Israel's rebel blood their fervor prov'd,
 And God confirm'd the worship which he lov'd.
 Such zeal was ours, (but now from France 'tis fled), 320
 When brothers, by the hands of brothers bled;
 When Coligny his errors paid with blood,
 And copious vengeance from our altars flow'd.
 Death mark'd my reign; recal those glorious days,
 Inspire my sons, their languid spirit raise!" 325
 She

She spoke, and wav'd her banner high in air,
 The cross, the sacred symbol we revere ;
 To Paris straight their solemn march she led,
 From rank to rank her fest'ring venom spread :
 Hell in their hearts, religion on their tongue, 330
 In sacred hymns their frantic fury rung ;
 Curses and prayers in impious worship join'd,
 With foul revolt God's peaceful name combin'd.

Th' anointed hand (6) the pike and musket rais'd,
 O'er humble sackcloth burnish'd armour blaz'd, 335
 While shameless priests, the shameful legion form'd,
 All Paris round their ranks enchanted swarm'd ;
 Before their van the God of peace was borne,
 And heav'n with shouts of blasted triumph torn !

Mayne too, beheld the monstrous, wild attempt, 340
 With open praises and conceal'd contempt ;
 Deep in that art, by princes long rever'd,
 To nurse the errors of the vulgar herd ;
 He knew how closely in the common mind,
 Fanatic fury and religion's join'd ; 345
 Praising the madness which his pow'r maintain'd,
 Tho' soldiers scoff'd, and all the wise disdain'd ;
 He smil'd to see their boiling frenzy rise,
 And joy, and rage, and hope, insult the skies !
 Still their weak souls, untemper'd passion leads, 350
 To fear's dead calm tempestuous rage succeeds ;
 As o'er the seas the spirit of the deep
 Calls up the storm, or bids the billow sleep.

Twice eight (7) the fiend selected for her own,
By guilt superior, 'midst the guilty shown. 355

Drawn in her reeking chariot by her side,
Their queen's new favour swell'd their vulgar pride ;
Fraud, Insolence, and Death, their march precede,
Their rear, wan Pestilence and Famine lead ;
Greatness, by hating all that's great, they sought, 360
And scoff'd at kings, to mend their sordid lot.

To highest honours by the rabble borne,
Mayne saw the wretches rise, with secret scorn ;
Discord and Faction no distinctions hear,
Th' accomplice of the great, becomes his peer. 365

As when the winds with boist'rous fury reign
O'er Rhone's majestic flood, or gentle Seine,
Rais'd by the storm, the mud and slime below,
'Midst foam and froth, upon the surface flow ;
Or thro' some town, when fires resistless rage, 370
Turns into dust the labours of an age,

Down with the boiling stream, promiscuous roll'd,
The basest metals blend with purest gold.

Themis alone, in those infected times,
Escap'd the foul contagion of their crimes ; 375
Nor hope nor fear, nor thirst of dear command,
Derang'd the balance in her steady hand ;
While to her temple, 'midst corruption, pure,
Affrighted Equity retir'd secure.

Lov'd by the guiltless, by the guilty fear'd, 380
A senate there by all mankind rever'd,

The

The sov'reign law supported and explain'd ;
'Twixt kings and subjects equal rights maintain'd,
And sure of justice in a monarch's breast,
Oft to the throne the complaints of France addrest.

385

Ambitious only of the public good,
Tyrants and rebels they alike withstood ;
Honour'd the crown, but to their duty true
The line 'twixt slav'ry and submission drew.
Respected Rome, but prompt in freedom's cause,
To check her pow'r, and vindicate the laws.

390

Her temple forc'd, indignant Themis saw
The ruffian bands pollute the shrine of law.
Meanly for hire, a gladiator bred,
By vice exalted, Bussy at their head (8),
Shameless upon their awful presence broke,
And thus, in threat'ning sounds, insulting spoke :

395

" Ye vile, plebeian, mercenary tribe,
Whose low-born pride to monarchs dares prescribe ;
Whose trade it is, law's endless maze to wind,
And prey upon the troubles of mankind :

400

Whose purchas'd titles are but shame's record,
Of faction and cabal, the mean reward ;
Cowards in danger, tyrants where you dare,
Hear what the people, what your lords declare :
Their rights were known, ere man a sov'reign knew,
Or earth was curs'd with such a race as you.

405

That people you've abus'd, no longer tame,
Their rights, their long-lost, sacred rights proclaim !

Crush'd

Crush'd be the sceptre that our tyrants bore, 410
 The pow'r, which we disown, is pow'r no more.
 Drop that vain title, hateful to our ear,
 That name of sov'reign, all men hate and fear ;
 Judge in the people's name, and let your court
 The nation's pow'r, and not the king's, support. 415
 Behold Sorbonne, its wiser footsteps tread,
 Obey the people, or their vengeance dread."
 Expressive silence thro' the senate reign'd :
 Such were the sages captur'd Rome contain'd,
 When from the barb'rous Gaul, in silent state, 420
 Amidst her blazing walls, her fathers met their fate.
 " Rise, or obey!" with fury he rejoin'd,
 But fear with anger struggled in his mind.
 Then Harlay rose, in ev'ry virtue tried,
 As brave as just, the senate's chief and guide ; 425
 Their chains he bore, but in his brow enthron'd
 Sat justice, which their lawless pow'r disown'd.
 Their judge, and not their captive, he appear'd,
 The guilty wretches still his sentence fear'd :
 The senate burns, great Harlay's fate to share, 430
 In virtue's cause the tyrant's chain to wear,
 And nobly perish for their king and laws !
 Muse, give the heroes their deserv'd applause ;
 Fame sound De Thou (2), Molé, Scarron, Bayeul,
 Poitier, and great in early youth Longueil. 435
 To these, the just return of praise be paid,
 Thro' scoffing crowds, by lawless force convey'd,
 To

To that dark mansion of despair and blood,
 Where vengeance blends the guilty and the good.
 Thus impious faction thro' the land prevail'd,
 Thus laws were banish'd, thus religion fail'd !

440

Hark ! from the gath'ring crowd what shouts arise,
 What forms of death and torture strike my eyes !
 The felon's fate, what hero undergoes !

Whose gen'rous blood upon that scaffold flows !
 Alas ! is virtue then in France a crime ?

445

But spread their fame, my Muse, thro' endless time,
 Brisson, L'Archet, Tardif, (10) each honour'd name
 Ennobles ev'ry instrument of shame ;

To fame alike, the field or scaffold leads,
 Glorious his fate who for his monarch bleeds.

450

Discord, delighted, 'midst the factious bands,
 Proud of her dire success, exulting stands ;
 With cool, delib'rate cruelty surveys

The spreading waste, domestic strife displays ;
 Joys to behold them by dissention torn,
 From wave to wave, of civil tumult borne ;

455

Jarring, divided, but against the throne,
 Join'd for their country's ruin and their own ;
 Interior feuds, exterior dangers press,
 One scene of blood, confusion and distress !

460





NOTES

TO

CANTO IV.

(1.) **A BROTHER** of Joyeuse.] Henry Comte de Bonchage, a younger brother of the Duke de Joyeuse, who was killed at Coutras.

Returning at four o'clock one morning from a night of debauchery, he fancied that he heard the angels singing matins in the Capucins convent. Strongly impressed with this idea, he entered into their order under the name of *Frere Ange*. He afterwards quitted his gown and took up arms against Henry IV. The Duke of Mayne made him governor of Languedoc, duke, peer, and Mareschal of France. After his reconciliation with Henry IV. standing one day with that prince on a balcony under which the people were crowding, "See, cousin," says the king to him, "how curious the people are to see an apostate and a renegade together." Joyeuse immediately returned to his convent where he died.

(2) Where vengeful Mars.] The temple of Mars the Avenger, at Rome, is now the property of a convent of monks.

(3) Sextus.] Sextus V. Perretti, Cardinal of Montalto, near which place he was born of very mean parents. See Note (15) Canto III. He arrived at the papal dignity by fifteen years of the most consummate dissimulation: he affected imbecility so well during all that time, that he went by the name of *The Ass of Ancona*. With this mean opinion which he had given of his abilities, and the appearance of age and infirmity which he put on, he appeared an object of indifference to the rival parties in the conclave, who, when they could not carry their own point, agreed to nominate the Cardinal Perretti, as a man who could not hold the dignity long, and who had

made each of them believe that they might govern under him. Scarcely, however, was his elevation pronounced, he threw aside his crutches, raised himself erect from a position almost double in which he had past some years, and though he seemed before scarcely able to speak without danger of suffocation, instantly began the *Te Deum* in a tone which made the whole chapel ring. He was in reality but in his 64th year, and from that very hour began the most vigorous administration Rome had ever experienced.

(4) The Gallic senate.] During the wars of the 13th century between the emperors and the Roman pontiffs, Gregory IX. presumed not only to excommunicate the emperor Frederic II. but went so far as to offer the imperial crown to Robert, the brother of St. Lewis, King of France. The parliament of Paris answered in the name of the king, that it was not for the Pope to dethrone a sovereign, nor for a prince of France to accept from him a crown to which neither of them had any right. In 1570 the parliament gave its famous edict against the Pope's bull in *Gana Domini*. It was on every occasion ready to defend the rights of the French church and state against the encroachment of the see of Rome, at the same time that it respected its proper and useful authority. The English have been too much brought up to believe that blind obedience and superstition have been the characteristics of all Roman Catholic governments.

(5) Loos'd be the oaths.] On the 17th of January, 1589, the faculty of divinity at Paris issued the famous decree, which pronounced that the subjects were absolved from their oath of allegiance, and might lawfully make war upon their king. Lefevre, dean of the faculty, and some others of the wisest among them, refused to sign it. When the Sorbonne recovered its liberty, it revoked this decree which the tyranny of the League had extorted from some of its members. All the religious orders which had followed the Sorbonne also retracted. But would they have done so if the house of Lorraine had been victorious?

(6) Th' anointed hand.] When Henry III. and the King of Navarre appeared in arms before Paris, the monks put on armour and mounted guard with the citizens. But this part of the poem more particularly alludes to the procession of the League, where twelve hundred monks, completely armed, were reviewed by William Rose, Bishop of Senlis.

(7) Twice

(7) Twice eight.] The representatives of the sixteen quarters into which Paris was divided, and the most seditious among them. These sixteen were for a long time independent of the Duke De Mayne: one of them, called Normand, said one day at his court, "Those who made him can easily unmake him." The duke at last hung several of them.

(8) Bussy at their head.] On the 16th of January, 1589, Bussy Le Clerc, one of the Sixteen, who from a fencing-master was become governor of the Bastile and the chief of their party, entered the Grand Chamber of the Parliament at the head of fifty armed men, and presented to the magistrates a request, or rather an order, to renounce their allegiance to the reigning family. On their refusal he himself conducted to the Bastile all those who were enemies to his party, and made them fast upon bread and water to extort a greater ransom from them. He was ludicrously called the Grand Penitentiary of the Parliament, and stiled himself *Bussy la puissance*.

(9) De Thou.] De Thou, uncle to the celebrated historian.—Scarron, great grandfather to Scarron the comic poet.

(10) Brisson, &c.] On Friday 15th November, 1591, Barnaby Brisson, a man of great knowledge, who filled the place of first president in the absence of Achilles De Harlay; Claude L'Archet, a counsellor of the court of requests; and John Tardif, counsellor of the Châtelet, were hung from a beam in the Petit Châtelet, by order of the Sixteen. Hamilton, curate of St. Cosme, attended by priests as officers of justice, seized Tardif in his own house, and led him to execution.



ARGUMENT.

THE besieged are reduced to the greatest extremities. Discord raises from hell the demon of Fanaticism, who appears to Jaques Clement, a Dominican friar, in the form of the murdered Duke of Guise, and excites him to assassinate Henry III. Magic rites of the leaders of the League. Henry III. murdered. His army, with few exceptions, acknowledge Henry IV. for their king.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO V.

NOW the dire engines, whose sulphureous womb,
Pregnant with fate, contain'd the rebels' doom,
Bursting in iron tempests on the town,
Resistless swept its crumbling ramparts down.

The League's distracted rage, Mayne's prudent care,
The bigot's zeal, the people's wild despair,
Nor the mad eloquence their priests display,
Could now protract th' inevitable day.

In vain did Sextus rave and Philip threat,
Bourbon and conquest thunder'd at their gate.

The Spaniard's tardy genius mov'd too slow,
To ward from Paris, fate's impending blow ;
And Rome, no more the terror of the world,
Thro' empty air, unheeded thunders hurl'd.

Dominion was the false Castilian's aim,
Their dark invader, not their friend, he came ;

P

Watchful

Watchful, till half exhausted, his allies
 Left to his treach'rous arms, an easy prize ;
 Thro' France his straggling troops rapacious prey'd,
 Vainly the town implor'd his promis'd aid :
 Its fall was doom'd ; when, rais'd by factious hate,
 A bigot's dagger turn'd the tide of fate !

20

You, whose soft hours in Paris tranquil flow,
 Reserv'd by Heav'n these better times to know ;
 Forgive the Muse, if, blushing, she retrace
 The guilty deeds of your forefathers race.
 Let not the thought disturb your happy days,
 Your duteous loyalty their crime repays.

25

At ev'ry period, in the church we find
 A sect of hermits, sep'rate from mankind ;
 Their lives a scene of penance and of pray'r,
 Their morals strict, their discipline severe.
 Some on the cloister's holy solitude,
 Ne'er let one passion of the world intrude ;
 The peace they cherish'd, by retreat preserv'd,
 And shunn'd their breth'ren whom they might have serv'd.
 More active some, more useful in their choice,
 Rais'd in the busy scene their sacred voice ;
 But while with man, their moral labours lay,
 His passions, to their bosom found their way ;
 Ambitious pow'r their hearts in secret gain'd,
 And dark intrigue their holy work profan'd :
 Thus will abuse around perfection wind,
 And blight, the fairest virtues of mankind.

30

35

40

Those

Those who in Dom'nick's subtle school were bred, 45
 In Spain, from pulpits to the palace spread ;
 In France less pow'r, but not less zeal they knew,
 Beneath the monarch's care their order grew ;
 Cherish'd, rever'd and happy had they liv'd,
 If Clement's (1) treach'rous vow they'd ne'er receiv'd. 50

That gloomy soul, from earliest youth accurs'd,
 In dark retreat his sullen virtue nurs'd ;
 Ardent and weak, with fancy'd visions fed,
 Devotion drove him where rebellion led.
 The factious gall which in his bosom lurk'd, 55
 To phrenzy, his embitter'd passions work'd ;
 Till once, 'tis said, in dust and ashes prone,
 Impious he thus address'd th' Almighty throne.

" O God ! whose vengeful justice should descend
 To crush the tyrant, and thy faith defend, 60
 Is murder now, and heresy, thy care ?
 Thy wrath unjust, must we, thy children, bear ?
 Too long the partial trial we endure,
 Too long a Godless monarch reigns secure.
 Raise thy dread arm, O God ! thy people save, 65
 Descend upon the king, thy anger gave ;
 Spirits of ruin his approach proclaim,
 Ye Heav'ns announce his wrath in show'rs of flame !
 Their trembling host, avenging lightnings blast,
 Their chiefs, their soldiers, perish to the last ! 70
 Let their two kings expire before my eyes,
 Drive them like wither'd leaves when storms arise ;

Sav'd by thy arm, thy League its voice shall raise,
And o'er their breathless bodies chant thy praise !"

Stopp'd by these accents in her mid career,
Discord, in air suspended hung, to hear ;
Then dropt to Hell, and from it's dungeon drew
The fiercest fiend those fiery regions knew ;
Fanaticism !—Nature abhors the name,
Unown'd the monster from Religion came ;
Nurs'd in her bosom, arm'd for her defence,
His aim destruction, zeal his fair pretence.
'Twas he on Raba's plains, near Arnon's flood (2),
Taught Ammon's wretched race the rites of blood ;
To Moloc's shrine, the frantic mother led,
To slay the infant which her womb had bred :
He form'd the vow which Jephthe's lips exprest,
And plung'd his dagger in his daughter's breast !
'Twas he, at Aulis, Calchas voice inspir'd,
When Iphigenia's blood the priest requir'd ;
Thy forests, France, were long his dark abode,
Where streams of blood, to fierce Teutates (3) flow'd ;
Still does affrighted memory retain
The sacred murders of the Druid fane,
From Rome's proud capitol his dreary voice
Bad Pagan zeal in Christian blood rejoice ;
But when no more the tyrant of the earth,
Rome, falling, own'd the God's mysterious birth,
From Pagan temples to the church retir'd,
The fiend, with rage, Christ's meek disciples fir'd ;

75

80

85

90

95

100

Teaching

Teaching the patient martyrs of his word,
 To brandish persecution's bloody sword.
 'Twas he that furious sect in London bred,
 By whom too good, too weak, a monarch bled !
 Madrid and Lisbon yet his rites disgrace;
 He lights those piles, where Israel's hapless race,
 By Christian priests, in yearly triumph thrown,
 Their fathers' heav'n-taught faith, in flames atone !

105

Robed in Religion's vestments to our eyes,
 Still from the church, he borrow'd his disguise :
 But now from shades to endless darkness doom'd,
 For other crimes, another garb assum'd ;
 Boldness and artifice the dress supplied,
 And Guise's form and Guise's look belied ;
 That haughty Guise, whom France beheld so late,
 The tyrant of the king, and of the state;
 Whose spirit baleful, from the tomb arose,
 In death itself, still fatal to his foes.

110

115

O'er his dark brow a pond'rous helmet glar'd,
 Athirst for blood, his hand a faulchion rear'd ;
 His breast the marks of Valois' vengeance bore,
 Wide gaping as it heav'd, with clotted gore !
 Those ghastly mouths against the monarch plead,
 And ask the due revenge of such a deed.

120

While sleep and darkness all the world possest,
 In this dire form to Clement's cell he press'd.
 Cares and intrigue his restless slumbers broke,
 By starts, fermenting passions wildly spoke,
 And rage, tho' sleeping, aim'd some dreadful stroke !

125

False

False Zeal sat watching by her vot'ry's bed, 130
 Pale Superstition hover'd round his head ;
 With joy to meet their Guise's form they ran,
 Which in majestic accents thus began :
 " God hears thy pray'r, thy fervent vow receives,
 But still that tepid soul its God deceives ; 135
 Sill are complaints and ineffectual words,
 The barren tribute timid zeal affords ;
 God asks another worship from our hands,
 And what thou seekst from him, from thee commands.
 Had Judith, when her people's foe prevail'd, 140
 With tears and vows alone, their fate bewail'd ;
 Had private fears her public spirit known,
 Judith had seen Bethulia's walls o'erthrown.
 Such is the spirit heav'nly zeal inspires,
 And such the worship which our God requires. 145
 'Tis not enough to blush for this delay,
 Arise, and wash in blood the stain away !
 Strike, and set Paris from its tyrant free,
 Avenge the church, the state, the world, and me !
 See the foul wounds his treach'rous dagger made : 150
 In the same measure let his debt be paid !
 Let not a murd'rer's name thy soul affright,
 That which was wrong in him, in thee is right.
 'Tis sacred murder !—Heaven approves the blow :
 'Tis virtue to destroy the church's foe ! 155
 'Tis virtue !—'Tis our God's supreme decree ;
 That God, demands the tyrant's blood from thee !
 Oh !

Oh ! had he bid our vengeance be complete,
 That Bourbon too, his just desert should meet ;
 That France, deliver'd from the hated pair, 160
 Should owe to thee—But God denies our pray'r ;
 Bourbon must live !—The God he still offends
 For other hands that glorious deed intends.

Receive, and use, the present he bestows,
 Strike down the victim which his anger shows !” 165

The phantom ceasing, to his eyes display'd,
 Forg'd in infernal fires, a horrid blade ;
 Plac'd in his grasp, the weapon, hell bestow'd,
 And sunk, delighted, to his dark abode.

The zealot youth, too easily deceiv'd, 170
 As Heav'n's command the voice of Hell believ'd !
 Embrac'd with extasy the fatal sword,
 Prostrate to God, his sacred aid implor'd.
 The frantic demon all his soul possess,
 And dire devotion steel'd his ardent breast. 175

Conscience, corrupted judge, with vice combin'd,
 False to his charge, misleads his erring mind ;
 The calm of innocence to guilt bestows,
 The murd'rer's heart with holy transport glows ;
 He wearies Heav'n with sacrilegious prayers, 180

A modest air his tranquil fury wears ;
 While virtue's purest form, his looks reveal,
 His humble sackcloth, hides th' infernal steel !
 He goes, and conscious of his dread design,
 His friends strew flow'rs, triumphant chaplets twine ; 185
 Far

Far as the gate his steps rever'd attend,
 Bless the bold deed, advise, exhort, commend ;
 Amid their guardian saints his name invoke,
 His shrines already with their incense smoke.
 Not with more zeal Christ's new disciples glow'd, 190
 When the first martyrs seal'd their faith with blood !
 Nor firmer faith, nor hope more lively knew,
 When crowns immortal holding to their view,
 They kiss'd their steps, and join'd in fervent pray'r,
 Led them to tortures which they long'd to share. 195
 Too oft alike, to worldly eyes, appear
 The graceless bigot and the saint sincere ;
 Men have their blood for truth and falsehood spilt,
 Its martyr's error has, its hero's guilt.
 So frail the judges which our merits scan, 200
 The greatest wretch oft seems the greatest man.
 Their project 'scaped not Mayne's extensive view,
 But o'er his eyes an artful veil he threw ;
 Unconscious seem'd—but sought with secret care,
 The fruits of guilt, and not the guilt to share ; 205
 And wisely wicked, left to faction's breath
 To work the gloomy monk to Valois' death !
 While thus the League around their champion wait,
 Or watch his steps devoutly from the gate,
 With sacrilegious rites the leaders try 210
 Thro' dark futurity's abyss to pry,
 Forcing to light his unperfected crime,
 By spells aborted from the womb of time.
 Oft

Oft in these rites the queen (4) had borne a part,
 Sounded each secret of this guilty art ;
 With mad insatiate thirst of knowledge burn'd,
 The bounds laid down by God, audacious spurn'd !
 Extorting from indignant shades of night,
 Secrets which Heav'n refus'd to human sight.
 O'er the weak crowd their queen's example gain'd,
 Thro' all the realm th' impious science reign'd.

215

220

In the dead silence of the night, they sought
 Their temple, in a gloomy mould'ring vault,
 One sulph'rous torch, a lurid blaze supplies,
 While o'er a gaping tomb their altars rise.
 With horrid imprecations, on their shrine,
 God and infernal spirits, they combine ;
 While the pale objects of their hate and fear,
 The brother kings, in waxen forms appear.
 Cauldrons of human blood around them smoke,
 And magic lances in the cauldron soak !
 Their priest, a son of that ill-fated race,
 Kept on this earth for mis'ry and disgrace ;
 Strangers, among mankind, condemn'd to err,
 From shore to shore their impious rites to bear ;
 And thro' each link of Time's revolving chain,
 Despisd, and curs'd, and hated, to remain.

225

230

235

Now round the Jew, they raise a direful yell,
 And now commence the magic rites of Hell ;
 Their arms in boiling blood are trebly dy'd,
 Their reeking daggers plung'd in Valois' side !

240

Dash'd



Dash'd on the ground, and spurn'd beneath their feet,
With wilder phrenzy Bourbon's form they meet.

Calling on death, persuaded he obeys,
And to the monarch's heart their steel conveys ; 245
Pray'rs, mix'd with curses, blasphemous they pour,
And earth, and air, and God himself, implore !
The lightning's blast, the scorching flames of Hell,
With all the spirits which around us dwell !

Such were the secret rites, the Pythian paid 250
At Gelboa, when she call'd up Samuel's shade ;
Such accents from the lying prophets burst,
When Judah from Samaria's hill they curst :
In such Ateius (5), at the gates of Rome,
Conjur'd th' infernal gods to Crassus' doom. 255

Fondly they thought, that to their spells was given,
To force an answer from the breast of Heaven !
Which Heav'n was pleas'd, in vengeance, to dispense,
Holding the laws of Nature in suspense.
Eternal silence, monstrous voices broke, 260
Thrice the dumb vaults in hollow murmurs spoke ;
Blue lightnings rend the heavy veil of night,
Flash and eclipse by turns their pallid light,
While in the flitting blaze their wond'ring eyes
See Henry's figure, crown'd with laurel rise ; 265
On victory's proud car, in triumph stand,
The ensign of dominion in his hand.
Now bursting flames, the crumbling shrine consume,
Pale fires, the gaping vault around illumine.

The

The priest, the leaders, struck with dire affright,

270

Fly to conceal their fears and crimes in night.

Those sounds unnatural, those fires that glar'd,

Valois' inevitable doom declar'd.

God, from his throne, the monarch's fate had weigh'd,

To ruin giv'n him, and withdrawn his aid ;

275

To punish guilt, allow'd to guilt its way,

And Death, impatient, stood to sieze his prey !

Meanwhile, upon his bloody purpose bent,

The bigot monk approach'd the monarch's tent ;

And sued admittance, while he boldly cried,

280

" I come to save the king, and God my guide.

Important secrets for the monarch's ear,

His servant bears, and he alone must hear !"

Long in the guard, suspicious doubts arise ;

Calmly to ev'ry question he replies.

285

Still new distrust, his monkish garb affords,

But simple candour seems to guide his words.

At length suspicion yields to well-feign'd truth,

To Valois' tent they lead the dauntless youth.

Serene, compos'd, his king the traitor sees,

290

Humbly, deliberate, he bends his knees,

At leisure, while he meditates his blow,

Soft from his lips, these treach'rous accents flow :

" A while, great king, thy prostrate servant bear,

While to the King of kings he pours his pray'r ;

295

Bear, while my soul its grateful praises pours,

For all the blessings, which for you he stores ;

Villeroy (6), Potiers (7), both virtuous, wise and true,
 Faithful remain, amidst the rebel crew ;
 And gen'rous Harlay (8), whose intrepid zeal 300
 The faithless crowd, has long been us'd to feel ;
 E'en from his dungeon every heart unites,
 Confounds the League, and vindicates your rights.
 God, who the mighty and the wise withstands,
 To work his greatest deeds with weakest hands, 305
 To Harlay's prison deign'd my steps to guide ;
 God bade his wisdom in my truth confide.
 This letter trusted to my zealous care,
 I flew with transport to my prince to bear !"
 Valois the letter with impatience caught, 310
 And bless'd the happy change which God had wrought.
 " How shall my grateful justice find a way,
 Thy noble service, and thy zeal, to pay ?"
 Then, bending to him warmly as he spoke,
 Secure, the monster aim'd the fatal stroke ; 315
 And plung'd his dagger in the monarch's side !
 From the deep wound gush'd forth life's crimson tide !
 All was dismay, and terror, and surprize,
 To strike the wretch a thousand weapons rise !
 He, only he, unmov'd, unalter'd, stood, 320
 Their weak revenge, with cool contempt, he view'd.
 Proud of his crime, to France he paid his debt,
 And death, his recompence, with transport met !
 The saviour of the church and state he seem'd,
 Heav'n, to his eyes, upon its champion beam'd. 325

A martyr's

A martyr's crown his ardent soul desir'd,
He blest the hands that gave it, and expir'd !

O ! strangely blind, infatuated state,
We know not most to pity or to hate !
Nor his, perhaps, the greater share of guilt ;
Still more by them, the monarch's blood was spilt,
Whose lips dropt treach'rous poison, to seduce
The gloomy passions, of a weak recluse.

330

Now Valois' hour approach'd, his closing sight
Faintly receiv'd a parting gleam of light.

335

Around his couch his weeping courtiers throng'd,
One common note of grief to all belong'd.

Dissembled tears, and real feeling join'd,
As diff'rent prospects open'd to their mind.

Some wept with secret joy the prince's end,

340

Who saw their fortunes on the change depend ;

Others, whose bosoms, selfish fears engross'd,

Wept not their monarch, but their greatness lost.

Amidst those diff'rent scenes of tears and sighs,

Drops of true sorrow fell from Henry's eyes ;

345

Superior minds with warmest feelings glow,

Their pity still attends a fallen foe !

Bourbon's great soul disdain'd a selfish thought,

All his own wrongs in gen'rous grief forgot ;

Unmix'd for Valois' fate his sorrow flow'd,

350

Unconscious of the crown his end bestow'd.

Ere death his dark eternal curtain drew,

His closing eyes the king on Henry threw ;

In

In his cold hand, the hero's hand he prest,
In broken accents, thus his soul express'd : 355

“ Bourbon, indulge that useless grief no more,
Nations, indignant, shall my fate deplore ;
All but a monarch's feelings, you, restrain,
Weep not, but conquer, and revenge, and reign !
Valois' no more !—The stormy, treach'rous wave, 360
Which wreck'd his hapless bark, 'tis yours to brave ;
Yours is my throne, to you my rights descend,
You best deserve it, and can best defend.

Enjoy your greatness, but with watchful eyes
Mark the dread tempests which around it rise ! 365
Fear God who gave it, and his rites restore,
Let specious error, lead your steps no more.
Farewell !—and may your better fate withstand,
May Heav'n avert the dark assassin's hand !
You know the League, their deadly hate you see, 370
To reach your heart, their daggers pass'd thro' me !
Perhaps more horrid deeds they now prepare,
Forbid it, Fate !—such matchless virtue spare !
Protect”—Grim Death his leaden sceptre dropt,
His voice in everlasting silence (9) stopt ! 375

At Paris, when the monarch's fate was known,
Tumultuous transport seiz'd the guilty town ;
With flow'ry wreaths, their shameless fronts were bound,
Their streets re-echo'd with triumphant sound ;
Their shrines were deck'd, their usual labours ceas'd, 380
Their sacred rites, proclaim'd th' eternal feast !

Bourbon

Bourbon a hero seem'd, without resource,
 Whose fame and valour, were his only force :
 Could he, unaided, with such foes engage ;
 The Church, the strengthen'd League, the Spaniard's rage ? 385
 The thunders, Rome's imperious pontiff hurl'd,
 And gold, more fatal, from a new-found world !

Some warriors too, but with a courtier's heart,
 With zeal pretended, from his standards part ;
 But most, this mean pretext of conscience spurn, 390
 With martial ardour for their sov'reign burn :
 Those gen'rous soldiers, friends by danger try'd,
 To honour train'd, with Bourbon for their guide,
 To wav'ring France, the great example set,
 To place the crown, where birth and merit met. 395
 Those gallant knights, whose never-fading fame,
 Kindles thro' all their race the sacred flame :

The gen'rous sons of Givry and Daumont,
 Of Montmorency, Sanci, and Crillon ;
 Less prompt to argue, than to wield the sword, 400
 To Henry's fortunes plight their honest word !
 True to their country, to religion true,
 Bright honour marks the path, which they pursue.

“ To you, brave friends,” the hero cries, “ I'll owe,
 The rights which from a race of heroes flow ; 405
 Your fathers nam'd their monarchs in the field,
 The plain their temple, and the throne a shield.
 The peers, the sacred oils, the pomp of state,
 Adorn the crown, but not the king create.

Be yours victorious on the field of fame,
Like them, to France, her sov'reign to proclaim!"
Thus spoke the chief, and at his warriors head,
To earn his throne, the glowing squadrons led.





NOTES

TO

CANTO V.

(1) **CLEMENT's.]** Jaques Clement, a Dominican friar, born at the village of Sorbonne, near Sens, and aged twenty-four years and a half when he perpetrated this horrid deed.

This man, in his weak and fanatic mind, having conceived the plan of murdering the king, consulted his superior, Bourgoing, who far from dissuading him from it, recommended fasting and prayer, that he might the better know the will of God. His imagination, heated by this artful counsel, as he passed the night in prayer, he fancied that he heard, or was really made to hear, a voice ordering the death of the tyrant, and believed it to be a voice from heaven. Some have said, and perhaps not without foundation, that less spiritual incitements had been held out to him, by the Dutchess de Montpensier, sister to the Guises.

In order to get admission at St. Cloud, where Henry III. held his court, he procured various letters of recommendation, and was even carried there, on the 31st July 1589, by La Guesle, the Solicitor General. His presence of mind, on so awful a situation, is scarce to be conceived. On the morning before he left Paris, being laughed at for mending his shoes with a needle and thread, he answered coolly, "They will last the time I shall want them!" He slept soundly the night he passed at St. Cloud, and his breviary was found marked at the passage of Holofernes and Judith, by one who watched his actions by order of La Guesle. On the first of August, he was introduced to the king, to whom he delivered several letters; then saying he had private intelligence to communicate from the king's faithful subjects in Paris, desired that the courtiers should withdraw. He spoke for some time, presented some more letters, and observing that he had forgotten one of importance, drew a two-edged knife from his sleeve, and struck the king in the belly, leaving the weapon in the wound! Henry was heard to exclaim:

R

Ab,

Ab, malheureux ! que t'avois je fait pour m'assassiner ainsi ?"—"Unhappy man ! what have I done that thou shouldst assassinate me thus !" On hearing the king's voice, his courtiers re-entered : Henry had withdrawn the knife from the wound, and struck the assassin on the head ; they followed the signal, and Clement fell, pierced with numberless wounds, without having time to utter a single word. The readiness of the courtiers to put him to death, has made some think that more than one of them were interested in it, least he should make discoveries.

His death was as useful as his hand, to the cause of the League. Fanaticism transformed the murderer to a martyr, and the churches echoed with his praises, whilst Henry was represented as a second Herod. Crowds went to felicitate the mother who had been happy enough to bear a martyr ! Some would have statues erected to him ; his picture was placed on the altar, and the Abbé de Longuerue says, his canonization even was proposed at the Sorbonne. In fine, the Martyrdom of Jaques Clement, in octavo, with plates, was put up for sale.

Sextus, who daily received intelligence from the Commander de Dieu, resident at Rome, did not blush to pronounce his elogium in the Consistorium ; where, after comparing him to Eleazar and Judith, he exclaims : " This death, which strikes us at the same time with awe and admiration, will scarcely be credited by posterity. What ! a powerful king, surrounded by a great army, in the very act of reducing Paris to implore his mercy, falls under the arm, and by one blow, of a poor religious ! Without doubt this great example is given us, that each one may know the greatness of the judgments of God !"

(2) *Arnon's flood.*] A river on the frontiers of the land of Canaan, mentioned Deuteronomy, cap. xi. where Moloch was worshipped with human victims.

(3) *Teutates.*] One of the principal gods of the Gauls, supposed to be Mercury, to whom also the Druids offered human sacrifices.

(4) *The queen had borne a part.*] Magic had been brought so much into fashion by the queen Catherine de Medicis, that a clergyman of the name of Sochelles, who was burned for witchcraft on the Place de Greve, accused no less than 1200 persons of this pretended crime. This age is a strong proof of the weakness and credulity of the human mind

(5) *Atcius-*

(5) Ateius.] A tribune of the people at Rome, not being able to dissuade Crassus from his expedition against the Parthians, placed a burning cauldron on his way through the gates of Rome, and with magic sacrifice conjured the infernal gods to curse his undertaking.

(6) Villeroy.] Nicolas de Neuville, lord of Villeroy, a man of great parts, secretary of state to Charles IX. at the age of twenty-four, anno 1567; continued in office during the three following reigns. Has left some very interesting memoirs, particularly from 1567 to 1604. He died at Rouen 12th Nov. 1617, aged seventy-four.

Henry IV. one day speaking of his different ministers, expressed himself as follows:—
 “ Villeroy has been long practised in business; is thoroughly acquainted with the transactions of his own time: he has, from his earliest youth, been employed in state affairs: he observes great order and regularity in the transactions of his office, and judgment in distributing those papers which belong to his employment: he is generous, and his abilities appear by his modesty and silence, and his reluctance to speak in public; yet he is obstinate, and cannot bear to have his opinions contradicted, which, he thinks, ought to serve for good reasons: yet he will temporise a while, and waits with patience till the faults of others have proved him to be in the right, which I have sometimes found my advantage.”

(7) Potier.] Lord of Blancmesnil, born 1541, of a noble and ancient family of Paris, and President of that parliament. He was one of the most virtuous magistrates of his time. Not being able to make his escape from Paris, when that town declared for the League, he was made prisoner and confined in the Louvre. The faction of Sixteen brought him to his trial under pretence of a correspondence with Henry IV. and would have infallibly suffered death, had not the Duke of Mayne, venerating the virtue of this faithful magistrate, gone and delivered him from his prison. Blancmesnil threw himself at his feet, saying, “ My life I owe to you, my lord; but I still dare ask a greater favour: permit me to join my lawful sovereign, you know I cannot own you as such!” Mayne, struck at so much courage, granted his request. He afterwards served Louis the XIII. with as much fidelity as he had his father Henry IV. and was chancellor to Mary of Medicis when regent. He died anno 1635, aged ninety-five.

(8) Harlay.] Born in the year 1536, at Paris, succeeded Christopher de Thou, his father-in-law, as first-president of the parliament. His integrity was worthy of the best times

times of the Roman republic. During the League, Harlay was immoveable; irritated at seeing religion made a mask for rapine and revolt, he courageously answered Guise, "That it was shameful to see the servant put the master out of doors; for my part, my soul is in the hand of God, my heart my king's; as to my body, I leave that, if necessary, to the factious who desolate this unfortunate kingdom!" He was kept for some time in the Bastille by the factious Bussy Le Clerc. In fine, Henry IV. having restored peace to the kingdom, Harlay was particularly useful in re-establishing justice and the power of the laws. He died 23d of October, anno 1616, aged eighty.

(9) His voice in everlasting silence stopp'd.] Henry III. expired the 3d of August, 1589, at two in the morning, in a house at St. Cloud; not the same where the St. Bartholomew had been resolved on, as some historians have asserted, it not being built at the time of that horrid massacre.

Henry III. the last of the house of Valois, was murdered in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and the sixteenth of his reign. His body was buried in the abbey of Compeigne, and in 1610 transferred to St. Denis.



ARGUMENT.

AFTER the death of Henry III. the States of the League meet at Paris to choose a King. In the midst of their deliberations Henry IV. assaults the town.—The members of the States fly to the ramparts.—Description of the battle.—Apparition of Saint Lewis to Henry IV.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO VI.

LONG in the land rever'd, a law prevails,
When Death's all-lev'ling hand the throne assails,
And of the royal blood our country's pride,
Thro' every branch the sacred source is dried;
With its last ebb, the mutual compact ends;
Back to the many, sovereign power descends:
The States of France proclaim the people's mind,
By them a Chief is nam'd, his power defin'd.

5

Thus, by our ancestor's august decree,
The crown of Charles, in Capet's line we see.

10

To shame, to reason lost, and blindly bold,
Those awful States (1); the League presume to hold;
From rank revolt and murder, madly draw
Their right, to name a king and change the law.
To wean the people's mind from Bourbon's claim,
To screen their plot, a pageant throne they frame;
A monarch's form, to give usurpers weight,
And vest rebellion with an air of state.

15

In France they deem'd, (so long the crown had sway'd),
A King, whate'er his right, must be obey'd. 20

Soon to the States with noisy pomp declar'd,
By blind ambition led, the Chiefs repair'd.
Lorraine, Nemours, the clergy's bigot train,
The tools of dark intrigue, from Rome and Spain.
There bloated luxury by famine fed, 25
Pamper'd by public mis'ry, rear'd her head;
While round the Louvre where the traitors meet,
Indignant ghosts of Gallic monarchs fleet.

No princes in those States, no peers attend,
By birth design'd to counsel and defend; 30
Who less in pow'r, but yet as great in fame,
Still near the throne their honor'd station claim.
There the wise guardians of our sacred laws,
Rais'd not their manly voice in freedom's cause.
The spotless emblem of our country scorn'd, 35
A foreign pomp the blushing walls adorn'd;
Rome's foreign agent there usurps a place,
And Mayne's proud seat unusual honors grace,
While o'er his throne appear'd this bloody scroll:
"Kings! whom no conscience binds, no laws control, 40
Let terror your remorseless pow'r restrain:
From Valois blood—ye tyrants, learn to reign."

The Synod met—Soon from each clam'rous tongue,
Loud and confus'd, the peal of faction rung:
Error and vice thro' all their councils reign'd. 45
Some, by the lure of empty titles gain'd,

Lowly

Lowly ambitious and ignobly great,
 Court the mean honors of a foreign state:
 To Rome's proud envoy bend obsequious down,
 And bow the lilies to the triple crown: 50
 Their aim in France that hateful court to raise,
 That shameful monument (2) of monkish days,
 Whose yoke Iberia suffers and detests;
 Whose sacred dagger rankling in our breasts,
 Makes us abhor the God whom we adore 55
 Midst racks and flames besmear'd with human gore.
 Acting on earth those woful scenes again,
 When gods relentless were the scourge of men;
 When the false priest, with human victims, laid
 The brain-wrought furies he himself had made. 60
 Others as basely brib'd by Spanish gold,
 To whom they hated worst, their country sold;
 But most, th' audacious project madly own,
 To place usurping Mayne on Capet's throne:
 The power already his—the glitt'ring name, 65
 The next proud object of his hope became;
 In secret joy his soaring thoughts elate,
 Scal'd the dread eminence of kingly state.
 But Potier (3) rising, on their councils broke,
 Virtue was eloquence when Potier spoke: 70
 In those sad days with crimes and horrors stain'd,
 The cause of virtue he alone maintain'd;
 Maintain'd the rev'rence of his sacred trust,
 By all respected---tho' he dar'd be just.

Oft

Oft did th' unshaken temper of his soul 75
 Their factious plots and base designs control.
 Murmurs, confusion, noise, th' assembly fill,
 They run---they crowd---they hear---and all is still.

On ocean thus when winds have ceas'd to roar,
 When brawling mariners are heard no more; 80
 Guiding the vessel thro' the yielding main,
 The faithful rudder strikes our ear again.

Thus seem'd Potier---Wisdom inspir'd his tongue,
 Confusion own'd his voice and list'ning hung.

" Would you on Mayne confer the sov'reign sway! 85
 What specious error leads your minds astray!
 True, he has virtues which deserve a throne,
 And were it mine to give, 'twere his alone:
 But France has laws, which he who dares oppose,
 Forfeits the claim superior worth bestows; 90
 Great as he is, if he aspire to reign,
 No more he merits what he seeks to gain."

Scarce had these accents reach'd their wond'ring ears,
 With regal pomp Lorraine's proud Chief appears:
 Potier unmov'd beheld the prince advance. 95

" Yes, " boldly he resum'd, " for us, for France,
 In Mayne's great soul such confidence I feel,
 To him, against himself, I dare appeal:
 Vain the attempt to fill our sovereign's place,
 Bourbon remains: next to his honor'd race, 100
 Next to his throne, Lorraine was rais'd by fate
 To grace, to strengthen, not usurp his state.

Guise

Guise from his tomb no more relentless cries;
 His vengeance, let a monarch's blood suffice !
 The ransom of a crime, a crime has paid, 105
 He asks not more to soothe his angry shade.
 With Valois too, expire your vengeful hate,
 Bourbon is guiltless of your brother's fate ;
 His breast, like yours, with ev'ry virtue glows,
 Heav'n never made such heroes to be foes. 110
 But hark ! what sullen murmurs strike my ear ?
 What signs of rage and hell-born zeal appear ?
 Relapse and heresy ! False zealots cease,
 Sheathe—sheathe those daggers, ministers of peace !
 What right, what precedent does Heav'n afford 115
 To arm the priest against his lawful lord ?
 Say, does the son of sainted Bourbon's race
 Perjur'd, your temples raze, your shrines deface ?
 No, no, for sacred truth the monarch burns,
 Obeys the law your head-long fury spurns; 120
 Virtue alike in ev'ry sect reveres,
 Respects your worship, your abuses bears ;
 He leaves to God, who sees the hearts of men,
 What you'd usurp—to judge and to condemn,
 Taught by that God whom we alike believe, 125
 He comes to rule his children and forgive :
 Must he not share the freedom which he brings ?
 What right have you to dictate to your kings ?
 What charter to your factious zeal is giv'n,
 To brave your sov'reign in the name of Heav'n ? 130
 False

False to your country, to your flock untrue,
 How much unlike those early Christians you !
 Who, when a Pagan race the sceptre sway'd,
 Disclaim'd their idols but their laws obey'd ;
 Without repining, on the scaffold bled,
 And bless'd the hand by which their blood was shed.
 Thus, thus alone, true Christian zeal appears ;
 Your kings you murder, but they died for theirs.
 Of heav'nly wrath if what you say be true,
 That wrath, that vengeance, is reserv'd for you."

135

140

He ceas'd, but none replied: shame and remorse
 Seal'd up their lips, they shrunk beneath his force,
 And vainly struggled with the truth he taught,
 It flash'd conviction on their stubborn thought.
 While fear and anger in their breasts contend,
 Sudden the air ten thousand voices rend ;
 In shouts confus'd from each surrounding post,
 To arms ! to arms the League ! or all is lost !
 Thick clouds of dust advancing as they rise,
 Cover the plain and darken all the skies ;
 The trump's shrill blast, the drum portentous, loud,
 Prophets of death, burst from the spreading cloud.

145

150

As from the frozen caverns of the north,
 The lowring tempest rolls tremendous forth,
 Wrapping in dusky clouds the frightened air,
 Its van the whirlwind, thunder in its rear.

155

'Tis Bourbon's host---impatient of repose,
 Athirst for blood---its widening front it shows ;

Wing'd

Wing'd with dire vengeance to the town it speeds,
Borne on the winds the voice of rage precedes.

160

No fruitless piety the hero stay'd,
To soothe with solemn rites his brother's shade;
On those sad plains no trophied pile he rear'd,
No pompous line bespoke its guest rever'd;
No sculptur'd praise, poor artifice of fame,
A while disputes with death---an empty name:
While living pride on mould'ring records fed,
Swells with the honors of the senseless dead.

165

A nobler tribute to his shade he ow'd,
A tribute worthy of a brother's blood;
Vengeance on each assassin's head he swore,
And mercy to the crowd deluded bore.

170

Their councils cease, the factious leaders rise,
Swift to the rampart, Mayne intrepid flies;
The troops assembling round his standard close,
And shout defiance to their coming foes.

175

Unlike the Paris of our happier times;
In the dark age of anarchy and crimes,
Bastions and forts by fear and rage design'd,
The narrow limits of the town confin'd.
Our suburbs open to the neighb'ring plains,
(Where peaceful confidence for ever reigns,
Where streets of lofty palaces extend,
And marble breathes, and gilded domes ascend),
Were then mean huts, in artless rows dispos'd,
By mounds and ditches from the town enclos'd.

180

185

There where the sun darts forth his morning ray,
 Bourbon appears : grim death prepares his way.
 Thick show'rs of iron hissing thro' the air,
 From either side unseen destruction bear ;
 Snatching ætherial flames to serve their rage,
 Mortals with more than mortal arms engage ;
 Bastions, and towers, and massy ramparts yield ;
 Legions at once bestrew the bloody field.

190

Time was, when war no subtle art refin'd,
 Ere death with baleful science was combin'd ;
 With murderous iron on a rougher plan,
 Man in his fury sought the death of man ;
 The brawny arm the rocky fragment threw,
 Or death was wafted from the springing yew.
 But impious knowledge swell'd death's ample store,
 And open'd ways to fate unknown before.

195

Flanders (4) first saw the hollow sphere ascend,
 Thro' heav'n's high vault with kindling vengeance bend,
 Hoisting its prison, till with hideous sound,
 The bursting tempest spreads destruction round.

205

More cruel still, with blacker art contriv'd,
 Deep into earth deceitful vengeance div'd ;
 Ripe for explosion hidden thunder bides :

In vain the hero in his strength confides,
 Scarce has he touch'd upon the fatal way,
 His gen'rous hope the lurking fires betray !
 The ruin breaks,—to countless atoms torn !

210

Whole squadrons thro' the flaming skies are borne.

Such

Such were the fields of death where Bourbon fought, 215
 Through such dread scenes, his crown the hero sought :
 Round him his warriors dauntless seek the foe,
 Though thunders roll'd above, Hell yawn'd below ;
 Glory her banner o'er his helmet wav'd,
 They saw but her, and ev'ry danger brav'd. 220

While these with martial ardor onward prest,
 Mornay alone his soul unmov'd possest ;
 Stranger alike to fury and to fear,
 Heedless the cannon thunder'd on his ear.
 War and its horrors in his stoic mind, 225
 Were ills by fate entail'd upon mankind ;
 His wisdom blam'd them, while his courage dar'd :
 His King he pitied, but his dangers shar'd.

The blood-stain'd glaci's stops their rage no more :
 Down on the cover'd way his squadrons pour, 230
 To fill the ditch their slaughter'd friends suffice
 Their courage rising as their dangers rise,
 Till rushing over mountains of the slain,
 The breach at length the crowding columns gain.
 First, at their head, their ardent prince ascends, 235
 His hand a falchion arms, a shield defends ;
 Already, planted by the monarch's hands,
 High o'er the town the royal ensign stands :
 The League astonish'd, struck with panic fright,
 Retiring, seem to own their monarch's right ; 240
 Till fierce Lorraine who saw his warriors yield,
 Indignant drove them to the guilty field.

Now on the King th' embolden'd rebels dart,
Whose look but then, unmann'd their conscious heart :
Amidst their bands fell Discord rear'd her head, 245
Exulting in the blood her children shed ;
The narrow rampart with delight she view'd,
Where ranks on ranks unerring slaughter strew'd.
Ceasing to bellow thro' the trembling air,
The cannons now their horrid din forbear, 250
And silence deep of sullen fury bred,
Its gloomy horror o'er the combat spread ;
Tearing a passage thro' each other's breast,
With steady rage their cruel weapons prest,
The bloody rampart fill'd with heaps of slain, 255
Now Bourbon seizes, now the League regain :
As waves alternate, when the tempests roar,
Now gain upon the land, and now desert the shore.
Victory wav'ring, now the lilies rears,
And now aloft Lorraine's proud standard bears. 260
Never did Bourbon, never Mayne, display
More brilliant valour than that fatal day :
Calm in the hurry of the dreadful scene,
Their scatter'd ranks the chiefs behold serene,
Distant, and near, the rage of battle guide, 265
And with a thought the fate of war decide.
The British youth by valiant Essex led,
First of the boldest on the rampart bled,
Surpris'd, beneath our standard they advance
To join their forces with the force of France, 270
Their

Their country's honor glowing in their breast,
 Their father's fame upon their mind imprest ;
 Proud on those plains to spill their gen'rous blood,
 Where Seine ere now beneath their empire flow'd.

Essex and young D'Aumale in glory vied ; 275
 With equal ardor fir'd, and youthful pride,
 Like heav'n-born heroes on the Trojan plain,
 They and their chiefs the bloody strife maintain ;
 French, British, Lorrainers, as rage impell'd,
 With mingled streams the crimson torrent swell'd. 280

“ Immortal spirit of th' embattled field,
 Who arm'd their hand, their glowing bosom steel'd,
 Who weigh'st our fate in heav'n's eternal scale,
 Declare which hero must at length prevail.
 Both in their turn with death the rampart strew'd, 285
 And pois'd in air the trembling balance stood ;
 Till justice and Bourbon decide the day :
 See thro' their broken ranks he cuts his way,
 Th' unequal fight no more the rebels try,
 Down from the walls dispers'd the traitors fly. 290

As from the Pyrenean's clouded head,
 With bursting skies the rushing torrents fed
 Down on the plain impell their foaming course,
 Nor mounds, nor banks, resist their growing force ;
 Soon the weak barrier spurn'd, the angry tide 295
 Ruin and terror spreads on every side,
 Drags down the rooted oak, whose lofty head
 Rear'd o'er the storm, to heav'n its branches spread,

Tears from the mountain's breast its native rocks,
Expands and sweeps from earth the trembling flocks. 300

So Bourbon from the walls his sword had won,
Rush'd on the rabble;---down the traitors run.
Soldiers and chiefs, confus'd with panic dread,
Trembling, dispers'd, the monarch's vengeance fled.
Proud Mayne himself abash'd, within the gate 305
Shelter'd his scatter'd force from certain fate.

Their valour now to madd'ning fury chang'd,
The conqu'ring squadrons thro' the suburb rang'd;
Fire, rapine, murder, mark'd them as they went,
And all that rage can act, or hate invent. 310

Bourbon the broken foe intent pursu'd,
Nor all those scenes of lawless horror view'd:
By valour fir'd, by victory elate,
Onward he darts to storm the fatal gate.
" Here, here!" he cries, " those flames those swords employ, 315
Here loose your rage, these guilty walls destroy."

Scarce had he spoke—descending from the skies
A form aërial stood before his eyes :
Reclin'd majestic on the lap of air,
Obedient winds th' approaching phantom bear : 320
Immortal glories round his temples shine,
And heav'nly beauties mark the form divine.

With mingled sounds of horror and of grief,
" Cease, cease!" he cries, " forbear, unhappy chief;
Let not one hour of guilty rage efface 325
The endless honors of my royal race,

O'er-

O'erturn my altars, boundless ruin spread,
 And leave thee gloomy monarch o'er the dead:
 Forbear! "—Struck with the more than mortal sound,
 Th' astonish'd troops fall prostrate on the ground, 330
 And havoc paus'd: but Henry's lab'ring breast
 Glory still fir'd, and martial rage possest:
 As billows heaving when the winds have blown.
 " O spirit of a world to us unknown
 Explain," he cries " the dread command you bear:" 335
 Then sounds of heav'nly sweetness reach'd his ear.
 " The sainted king, whom France reveres, you view,
 The friend, the father of your race and you,
 Who once on earth the toils of warfare bore,
 Whose God your faithless soul adores no more. 340
 But Lewis still admires, esteems his son,
 And God prepares to place him on his throne;
 Paris her sov'reign shall with joy receive,
 Mercy shall more than force or valor give.
 So God decrees: his high resolves I bear." 345
 The hero heard his voice with awful fear:
 Passion no more his soul relenting feels,
 Lowly before the sainted king he kneels;
 Soft tears of gratitude bedew his face:
 Thrice would his longing arms the saint embrace, 350
 Thrice from his touch the airy form retires,
 As the thin vapour which in air transpires.
 Meanwhile the League had rung the loud alarm,
 And crowds unnumber'd on the turrets swarm,

Chiefs,

Chiefs, soldiers, strangers, natives mingled flow, 355
 And pour down ruin on the King below :
 But Bourbon now was Heav'n's peculiar care,
 Harmless the fiery tempest hiss'd in air.
 With pity soften'd as he view'd the place,
 " Unhappy town," he cried, " deluded race, 360
 How long, alas ! will thy misguided rage,
 Rebellious war against thy sovereign wage !"
 Then like the sun which sets with milder beams,
 And greater to our eyes retiring seems,
 The hero from the fatal wall retired, 365
 By Lewis guided, and by God inspired :
 He sought those groves, where from the shading oak
 The saint ere now the words of justice spoke.
 Vincennes (5) how chang'd thy once enchanting bowers !
 How dark the shadow of thy frowning towers ! 370
 Perhaps e'en now within those grated cells,
 Some dread example of ambition dwells,
 Some mighty victim of the faithless court,
 Rais'd by its smiles to be misfortune's sport,
 Whose pliant soul to meanness form'd by pride, 375
 Now lowly cring'd, and now with monarch's vied ;
 This day, by silly mobs in triumph borne,
 The next,—sad object of their hate and scorn.
 Now from the west the shadows length'ning grew,
 Night her thick veil o'er guilty Paris threw, 380
 In murky darkness, undistinguish'd lay
 The blood and carnage of that fatal day.



NOTES

TO

CANTO VI.

(1) **T**HOSE awful States.] Though the poem supposes the convocation of the States immediately after the death of Henry III. they were not in reality held till four years after. This deviation from history is a poetical licence which Voltaire takes great pains to excuse in his notes on this Canto.

The truth is, Henry the Great besieged Paris some time after the battle of Ivry, in the month of April 1590; the Duke of Parma obliged him to raise the siege in the month of September following. The League, a long time after, called the States to choose a King in the place of Old Cardinal de Bourbon, whom they had acknowledged by the name of Charles X. and who then had been dead two years and a half. In the same year (1593), in the month of July, the King abjured the Protestant religion in the Church of St. Denis, and entered Paris in March 1594. So far was Henry then from reigning by right of Conquest that, had he not solemnly abjured an opinion which certainly was dear to him, and gone to mass to please his subjects, it is doubtful whether he ever would have reigned over them. Voltaire has taken no notice of the Duke of Parma in his poem, because he was too great a character, nor of the Cardinal de Bourbon, because he was too insignificant a one.

"I compose," he says, "a Poem, and not an History." Milton has certainly taken greater liberties with events where any deviation from the strict order of truth seems less excusable. I cannot help thinking that idea mistaken, which confines Poetry to the imagination: there is as much truth in Poetry as in History. From History we have a right to expect the exact detail of events in their time and place; but it is the province of Poetry to express, in such sounds as irresistibly draw our attention and grave themselves for ever on our mind, the sublime and unalterable truths which the genius of a poet (or his muse if you please) discovers in the human soul, in the great book of nature. His imagination only creates the scenery in which they are displayed, the events which draw them forth. It is false that gunpowder was known in the age of Charlemagne; yet

U

who

who will read the indignant reflections of Ruggiero, when he cast the carbine into the sea, and not acknowledge their truth? Who will pretend that Ariosto, the most fanciful of poets, is not full of truth? Dido never saw *Æneas*; perhaps neither ever existed: but let any woman read the fourth book of the *Æneid*, and say that it is not true from the beginning to the end. There are as many grand political truths in Juvenal and Lucan, and as finely expressed, as in Tacitus and Machiavel; yet there are modern statesmen who would almost blush to be seen with a poem in their hands: whether the fault be in the art, or in those who practise it, Poetry is almost in our days become the stamp of mediocrity, and who unfortunately writes verses is thought unfit for any thing else. Though the poet whom, notwithstanding the little taste we have left, we must admire,

————Not follow'd fancy long,
But stoop'd to truth and moraliz'd the song.

(2) That shameful monument.] The inquisition.—This horrid tribunal, which pretends to judge the most secret motions of the mind, was instituted by Pope Innocent III. in the beginning of the 13th century; and every Christian country in Europe, except England, has to blush at having submitted to its power. The French never were a people to bear it long; it never was generally received among them, soon disappeared, and is now scarcely remembered. It is a melancholy truth, that not one sect of Christianity can be fairly exempted from the reproach of religious persecution. The reformers of church abuses overlooked this, the greatest of them all. Loud as they are in their invectives against the inquisition, in the 18th century not individuals or families, but whole nations are still, for their religious tenets, deprived of the honors, confidence and emoluments of their country, and exposed to all the insult and danger of law in the hands of a party still embittered by religious zeal. Such is the frailty of human nature that it seldom is safe for one nation to reproach another with its vices: yet if there is a truth undeniable in politics, it is the inefficacy of religious persecution; if there is a truth in morality, it is the guilt of employing it.

(3) Potier de Blancmenil.] Already mentioned, Canto V. Note (7).

(4) Flanders first saw.] During the wars of Flanders under Philip III. an Italian engineer invented bombs: we are indebted to the Italians for the invention of almost all our arts.

(5) Vincennes.] It is well-known how the state prisons were crowded during the administrations of Richelieu and Mazarin: the number of unhappy victims confined in them under the mild administration of Cardinal Fleury exceeds belief.

CANTO



ARGUMENT.

SAINT LEWIS transports Henry IV. in a dream to Heaven, and to Hell: shews him, in the Temple of Destiny, his Posterity, and the great Men whom France was to produce.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO VII.

TO soothe our sorrows in this world of care (1),
The God by whom we breathe this vital air
Two friendly beings fix'd upon the earth,
Man's steady followers from his earliest birth;
The poor one's treasure, and the wretch's bliss: 5
This gentle Sleep, and Hope enchanting this.
When pain and labour elog the dreary road,
And wearied Nature faints beneath her load,
Sleep's balmy hand her wounded bosom heals,
Lulls in oblivion ev'ry care she feels, 10
Thro' all the languid frame, his opiate pours,
Till soft repose life's ebbing stream restores.
Hope props the soul, the drooping spirit rears,
Unsure the fruit, but sweet the flow'r she bears;
But let the heav'nly guest from God descend, 15
No fond deceit her flatt'ring smiles portend;

Pure

Pure as the sacred source from whence she came,
She whispers joys in God's eternal name.

“ Come, faithful couple, to my son repair,”
Lewis commands, and thro' the silent air 20
Sleep hears his voice, and slow to Henry's bower,
On lazy pinions moves the drowsy power.
The zephyrs scarcely breathe as he goes by,
Hope's children, airy Dreams, around him fly,
And mix'd with poppies, o'er the hero's brow, 25
Entwine the olive branch and laurel bough.

The royal circle which his temples grac'd,
On Bourbon's front the saint mysterious plac'd;
And “ Reign my Son,” he cried, “ triumphant reign,
The splendor of my royal race maintain: 30
But more than empire shall be yours, my son;
More than the pow'r, the fame your arms have won:
Small is the good which fame and power convey,
If Heaven with-hold fair Truth's eternal ray:
With worldly honors worldly deeds be paid, 35
With pain and labour bought, and soon decay'd:
See other empires to your wond'ring eyes,
The long reward of real virtue, rise.

Where fate conducts us follow and obey:
To God himself pursue your destin'd way.” 40
He spoke: and blazing high above this sphere,
A chariot bore thro' heav'n their bright career;
Swift as the lightnings dart from pole to pole,
With sounds as when the distant thunders roll.

So

So, wrapt in flames, from his disciples view,

45

High o'er the gazing world Elijah flew.

Midst the vast orbs that swim in boundless space,

Whose path audacious man presumes to trace ;

Kindled by God, the sun incessant burns,

Incessant round his blazing axis turns ;

50

Light rushes from his orb in bursting streams,

And life and warmth are wafted on his beams :

He marks the day, the season and the year,

To worlds inferior floating in his sphere ;

Obedient planets, whom th' almighty cause

55

Repells for ever, and for ever draws :

Each by the other bound, upheld and led,

The rays they borrow, in their turn they shed ;

While o'er their course, far o'er their liquid plains,

Thro' space, whose bound no mortal thought contains,

60

Unnumber'd suns, and worlds unnumber'd stray :

God wound the vast machine—and mark'd their way.

O'er all these heav'ns the God of heav'n resides :

Thither the saint the raptur'd hero guides :

Here all those various spirits take their birth,

65

Which breath'd thro' matter animate the earth ;

Here, after death, our souls ethereal flow,

Redeem'd for ever from their bonds below :

Here sits the Judge of all ; beneath whose feet

The spirits lent to earthly beings meet :

70

The God by all ador'd by all unknown,

Whom different climes by different titles own.

He

He sees with pity how man's reason strays ;
 How pride and folly in their endless maze
 Devoutly judge, with weak contracted sense ; 75
 What's endless, boundless, infinite, immense !

First-born of Time, Death ushers to his sight
 The ghosts departed from these realms of light :
 Bonzes and Bramins come at his command ;
 There, sons profane of good Confucious stand ; 80
 Persians (2) whom antient rites mysterious bind,
 In Zoroaster's school devoutly blind ;

And others, whom the sun's oblique ray
 Scarce ripens into life from frigid clay,
 Natives of new-found worlds, in forests drear, 85
 Where Truth's obstructed ray could ne'er appear ;

With sad astonishment, the Dervis train
 At God's right hand their prophet seek in vain ;
 In vain the pale recluse, before him, vaunts
 His vows, his suff'rings, and his self-made wants. 90

Light beam'd upon their souls ; silent they wait
 Trembling, th' eternal sentence of their fate.
 One glance decided, from those eyes that see
 At once, what was,---what is,---what is to be.

Far from the throne the hero stood in awe, 95
 Whence issues forth the fix'd eternal law ;
 Irrevocable doom,---which human pride
 Presumes on earth to model and decide.

" And what," says Henry in his soul, " will be
 On all these mortals, God's supreme decree? 100
 Will

Will he condemn them, that their souls were blind
 To truth, whose beams could never reach their mind;
 And judge their actions by that sacred book,
 On which their eyes were ne'er allow'd to look?
 No: God who made us, made us to be blest:
 He planted nature's law within our breast;
 'Tis he that reigns, when nature's voice prevails;
 That voice which never changes, never fails:
 Pagans to her all-saving law may trust,
 And Christ will own them if their hearts were just."

105

110

While reas'ning thus beyond the reach of man,
 Heav'n's deepest myst'ries he presum'd to scan;
 Out from the throne a voice in thunder broke:
 Heav'n and all nature trembled as it spoke:
 Awful the sound as shook the sacred hill
 When God to Israel's sons proclaim'd his will;
 Silent the choirs—the stars stood still to hear,
 And shout th' eternal word from sphere to sphere:

115

" Trust not, weak man, thy reason's feeble ray;
 God made thee not to know, but to obey:
 Hid from thy senses, to thy heart confest,
 His light to guide thee, shines within thy breast:
 Pride and injustice all his wrath shall bear,
 But blameless error all his mercy share."

120

He listen'd still, when borne thro' empty space,
 A whirlwind cast him on a hideous place;
 A desolate inhospitable plain,
 Dreary as Chaos, ere creation's reign.

125

Not all those suns which heav'nly bounty made,
 Could lend one ray to cheer the dismal shade. 130
 Pure spirits execrate its baneful air,
 No seed of genial life was planted there;
 But there, grim Death in all his terrors plac'd,
 With dire confusion, rul'd the noisome waste.
 What groans O God! were heard, what piercing screams! 135
 What bursts of smokey flame! what noxious steams!
 What shapeless monsters round the hero fleet!
 What fiery caverns yawn beneath his feet!
 " This," said the saint, " avenging justice built;
 This, the eternal tenement of guilt. 140
 Follow—wide are the gates, and steep the brink."
 Down thro' the fiery chasm at once they sink.
 Sorrows and sleepless cares obstruct the road;
 There was Despair, and Terror's dark abode:
 There Envy pining lay, and round her hung 145
 The laurels wither'd by her canker'd tongue,
 She hates the living, courts the mould'ring tomb,
 Light wounds her eye that glares athwart the gloom:
 She saw the monarch—turn'd away, and sigh'd.
 Near her, delighted with herself, sat Pride. 150
 Weakness, with sickly hue and downward eyes,
 Loves virtue, and with ev'ry vice complies.
 Ambition, wading thro' a sea of blood,
 O'er thrones, and tombs, and slaves, gigantic strode.
 Hypocrisy, in smiles and softness drest, 155
 Heav'n in her eye, but hell within her breast.

False

False Zeal, who bloody maxims wildly spread :
 Mean Avarice, by whom each vice is bred.
 Amaz'd what mortal dares their gloomy shades !
 Who with the saint their secret realm invades !
 The Fiends who rule the wicked, weak and vain,
 Behold the Chief, and tremble for their reign.
 New to his eyes, his soul they ne'er had known,
 Nor ventur'd there, where virtue rul'd alone.

160

Slowly they travel thro' the vast profound,
 While groups of hideous phantoms stare around.
 What sullen spectre, thro' the dusky night,
 Streaming fresh blood advances to my sight !
 Valois' assassin ! how he grasps the knife
 Edg'd by the League against his Sov'reign's life;
 See, while his effigy pollutes the shrine,
 While priests and rebels pay him rites divine,
 While Rome commends (3), the League invokes his name,
 How he belies them in eternal flame.

165

170

" Still," Louis cried, " a far severer fate,
 A harder sentence guilty sovereigns wait.
 How curse, those cruel tyrants of their day,
 Their treach'rous courtiers and their lawless sway;
 How wail their crimes committed or avow'd,
 By weakness left unpunish'd or allow'd :
 Their power, their greatness, all dissolv'd in death,
 Past all their pomp, and stopp'd the flattering breath.
 Vanish'd the artful mercenary brood,
 Who 'twixt the sovereign and his people stood.

175

180

How their past life upon their breast recoils :
 Stirr'd up by conscience, Hell within them boils.
 Virtue betray'd, in all her charms appears,
 The truth they hated, thunders on their ears;
 Her accents, how those trembling conqu'rors fear,
 Heroes on earth, but bloody monsters here.
 See, crush'd beneath the bolts their fury hurl'd,
 Those pests who scatter'd ruin thro' the world.
 Near them reclin'd, a weak degraded race
 The people's curse, behold ! the throne's disgrace;
 Monarchs who dos'd, while lawless creatures sway'd,
 And vice rapacious on their country prey'd.
 See their foul ministers to pain consign'd,
 These mean corrupters of the public mind,
 Who shameless to the crowd, for sordid gold,
 Posted their country's honors to be sold;
 Debas'd the awful senate of the land,
 Barter'd religion, justice and command,
 And branded on each pilf'ring bastard brood
 The stamp of virtue and of gen'rous blood.
 Curst be the man who first began the trade,
 Curst the mean lord who last the bargain made."
 Ye tender souls is this your sad abode
 Whose useless days in tranquil pleasure flow'd ?
 Too soft for vice, in ease voluptuous ran
 The silken thread, the lazy sisters span.
 And you, ye friends to virtue and mankind
 Is here your sentence with the guilty join'd ?

185

190

195

200

205

210

Of

Of doubt, or weakriess, does one moment blast
 A life, in deeds of moral goodness past?
 As deep revolving in his mind he stood, 215
 Th' unequal share of evil and of good,
 Pity's soft drops bedew'd his manly face:
 " Alas! " he cried " if our ill-fated race
 Is doom'd to this!—if endless tortures close
 A few short days of labour and of woes; 220
 Better, far better! had we never known
 This life (another's choice and not our own),
 Than curst with treach'rous power to disobey,
 And damn'd for straying, yet inclin'd to stray."
 " Cease," cries the Saint, " th' Almighty cannot err, 225
 Proportion'd to their crimes, the pains they bear;
 Think not the Deity who made mankind,
 For endless misery his work design'd:
 Justice with mercy still his wrath confines;
 In goodness only, without bound he shines. 230
 While mortals paint an angry, vengeful God,
 He bears a father's, not a tyrant's rod;
 With human weakness, human failings weighs;
 Nor fleeting joys (4) with endless pain repays."
 Thus while he spoke, the hero's steps he guides 235
 To happier realms, where Innocence resides.
 As the fair prospect open'd on his view,
 Unusual pleasures in his bosom grew;
 No sulph'ry flashes there inconstant gleam,
 But pure ethereal rays eternal beam; 240

Passion and care resign'd their fierce control,
 And sweet tranquillity fill'd all the soul;
 Thy power, O Love! exalted, pure, refin'd,
 Not such as mortals know, rul'd ev'ry mind;
 Uncloy'd the taste, still wishing still possess, 245
 Pleasures unmingl'd, without languor rest.

There, reign the virtuous kings of ev'ry age,
 The real hero, and the real sage.
 Clovis and Charlemagne on thrones of gold,
 The Gallic lilies still with joy behold; 250
 There, martial strife and gen'rous contest cease,
 There, adverse chiefs unite in endless peace.
 Tall as the cedar rising o'er the wood,
 Above them all, the people's Father, (5) stood:
 Monarchs around him with superior awe 255
 Bow down their sceptres, and receive his law;
 From ev'ry eye he wip'd the tear away,
 Mercy and justice shar'd his equal sway.
 Amboise, (6) alike to king and country dear,
 To both a friend, still to his prince was near: 260
 One minister those regions smil'd to see,
 By blood unstain'd, from base corruption free.
 Time once again such scenes with Lewis bring,
 A people happy, and a glorious king.
 Those heroes next, for gen'rous valour fam'd, 265
 By duteous loyalty, not rage, inflam'd.
 The Maid (7), our throne's support, our foes disgrace;
 Unnumber'd chiefs of Montmorency's (8) race;

Those

There, brave Tremoille (9), Clisson (10), De Foix (11), appear'd, }
 Guesclin (12), whom kings respected, tyrants fear'd, 270 }
 Bayard (13), for ev'ry virtue still rever'd.

" These," said the Saint, " to fame and virtue true,
 Like you, the wond'ring eyes of mortals drew ;
 Their God and mine, with ardent zeal they serv'd :
 Why from his father's faith has Henry swerv'd ? " 275

Thus mournful as he spoke, expanding wide
 An hundred brazen portals they descried ;
 Time through the gates, on wings unceasing borne,
 Still to depart appear'd, and still return.
 There, shrouded in impenetrable gloom 280

Reign'd Destiny.—There, the dark book of doom
 The melancholy tale of life contains,
 Our short-liv'd pleasures and our lasting pains
 Irrevocably stamp'd.—To Time consign'd,
 To scatter from his pinions thro' mankind, 285
 As, unperceiv'd, he plies his endless round.
 There, Liberty in chains mysterious bound,
 Her track foreknown, but not prescrib'd, pursues ;
 Her choice foreseen, yet ever free to choose.

But thro' the vast expanse what crowds arise 290
 Whose airy semblance skims before my eyes !
 " Here," says the Saint, " reside before their birth,
 The spirits of the future sons of earth ;
 Myriads of souls, from ev'ry age and clime,
 For God, all present, reigns o'er space and time ; 295
 Thro'

Thro' endless ages and unbounded space,
He marks the doom of each succeeding race.

See the first offspring (14) of thy royal line,
Him, round whose brows imperial lilies shine,
(Superior tho' his son's and father's fame),
His sword shall Belgium and Iberia tame.

300

“ Cloth'd in Rome's blushing honors, to his eyes
Scarcely beneath the throne two forms arise,
Proudly affecting more than royal state :

Armies, and courts, and princes, round them wait;
Not kings, but more than kingly power they claim,
Richelieu (15), and Mazarin (16), of endless fame.
Rear'd from the church by fortune's hand, they lay
The deep foundation of despotic sway.

305

The first, a daring, strong, relentless mind;
Subtle and false the next, in courts refin'd;

310

This boldly form'd the storms of fate to meet,
This artfully to bend, elude, retreat :

Both by the crowd detested and admir'd,

And both by jealous thirst of rule inspir'd;

315

Princes and nobles, both alike oppose,

The friends of kingly power, their country's foes.

“ First 'mid the second of the human race,
Whose humbler views man's happiness embrace,
Content with less, but not less solid fame,

320

Colbert (17), our country still shall bless thy name
While distant realms their fruitful tribute pour;
While arts and industry enrich our shore:

Thou

Thou, like the chief who murm'ring Israel led,
Repay'st thy people's calumny with bread.

325

“ But see! to whom do trembling nations bow?
Who bears dominion in his awful brow?

Who with transcendent power and glory reigns,
And leads consenting slaves in golden chains?

Less lov'd than thee, more fear'd, and more obey'd,
His brows, like thine, immortal laurels shade;

330

Too soon with Fortune's faithless smile elate,
But firm and dauntless 'gainst the frowns of Fate;

With worlds, unaided, glorying to contend,

Great in his bright career, still greater in his end.

335

“ 'Tis Lewis (18) reigns; each sister art revives,
With nature's self the glowing canvass strives,
The marble breathes, stupendous domes aspire,
The Muses tune their long neglected lyre.

“ Ye sons of science (19) hail! ye sacred band,
Whose toils the narrow sphere of sense expand,

340

Who mark the circling planets as they rise,

And trace their journey thro' the pathless skies:

Leave stubborn error to presumptuous pride,

Your modest doubt is wisdom's surest guide,

345

“ What dulcet sounds delight the ravish'd ear,

Hark! music gliding from her starry sphere;

To Greece no more and Italy confin'd,

Sooths ev'ry sense, and captivates the mind.

“ Blest race! who ev'ry palm of glory claim,
To conquer and to sing the conqueror's fame.

350

" 'Midst countless heroes who adorn the land,
 Foremost the gen'rous sons of Bourbon stand :
 See Condé (20), by his fiery spirit known,
 By turns the strength or terror of the throne. 355
 Behold his equal in their bright career,
 With godlike prudence blest, Turenne (21) appear:
 Admire in Catinat's (22) superior mind,
 The daring chief, the modest sage, combin'd.
 See Vauban's (23) compass trace th' impervious shield, 360
 And mock the brazen thunder of the field ;
 By courts neglected, 'tis the hero's fate,
 Our foes shall own that Luxembourg (24) was great.
 Th' imperial eagle grasps his bolt in vain,
 Villars (25) shall triumph on the German plain : 365
 Eugene will own his gen'rous rival's fame,
 And peace and war alike adorn his name.

" What youth (26) in modest majesty appears,
 Sad source of short-liv'd hope, and lasting tears ?
 Scarcely the lilied throne attracts his sight, 370
 He sinks, O heav'nly pow'rs ! in endless night ;
 Scarce to his country shewn, admir'd, and lost,
 Bourbon, nor France, no juster name shall boast :
 His people's happiness had mark'd his sway,
 And France---but Fate denied: one hapless day 375
 Gives her to mourn her Bourbon's gen'ral doom ;
 To weep the son's, the sire's, the mother's tomb.
 " But from the mighty ruin death has spread,
 One tender scyon rears its infant head,

One hope remains, a Bourbon still appears,
 Protect him Fleury! guard his helpless years,
 Give to my offspring, to thy care consign'd,
 The feelings of a man, a monarch's mind;
 Teach him, in all the splendor of the throne,
 To view his people's greatness, not his own.
 France! may his reign thy drooping genius rear,
 Once more in cloudless majesty appear,
 With Lewis let each useful art return,
 Thy humbled flag no more let ocean mourn;
 In vain between them seas unsocial roar,
 Let mutual wants unite each distant shore.
 But shun the dang'rous glory to be fear'd,
 For peace and justice be thy throne rever'd.

380

385

390

"Next to the royal youth (27), that hero view
 Whom calumny and envious hate pursue;
 Pliant, not weak, from pleasure's wanton maze,
 His eye the balance of the world surveys,
 With arts unknown before, his genius draws
 Each varied int'rest to the common cause
 Critic and patron, in his glowing mind
 See ev'ry talent, ev'ry art combin'd;
 The Soldier, Statesman, Citizen, allied;
 Himself no monarch, but the monarch's guide."

395

400

Deep thunders roll'd, thro' low'ring tempests rais'd
 Aloft in air, the Gallic lilies blaz'd,
 Beneath their shade the warlike sons of Spain
 Spurn Austria's eagles, prostrate on the plain.

405

“ How frail,” exclaims the saint, “ the schemes of man,
How deep the wisdom of th’ eternal plan!
Austria’s proud offspring rule the earth no more; 410
A Gallic king Iberia’s sons implore,
And Bourbon’s race—My son, that joy suspend,
Great are the dangers which the great attend;
In love united as in blood allied,
The kindred crowns may discord ne’er divide.” 415
He ceas’d : at once the brazen portals close,
A thousand forms of empty air arose;
The heav’nly regions vanish’d from his sight,
Lost and confus’d the vision sunk in night.
Meanwhile the rosy harbinger of day, 420
Blushing thro’ eastern skies, began her way,
The sable queen resign’d her starry reign,
And dreams and visions follow’d in her train.
Now with the lamp of day the monarch rose,
Celestial ardor in his bosom glows, 425
With heav’n’s own majesty his forehead beam’d,
Radiant as Israel’s chief the hero seem’d,
From Sinai when in heav’nly splendor bright
The wand’ring nation veil’d their dazzled sight.





NOTES

TO

CANTO VII.

(1) **THIS** Canto, in imitation of Virgil's Sixth *Æneid*, contains an epitome of the philosophical and religious opinions of the times.

(2) **Persians whom.]** Among the Persians, the Guebres have a separate religion which they pretend to derive from Zoroaster: less superstitious than many others, they worship with secret mysteries the Sun as the image of the Creator.

(3) **While Rome commends.]** Instead of the funeral oration of Henry III. the panegyric of his assassin was pronounced at Rome. At Paris his portrait was seen on the altar with the sacrament. Cardinal Retz, on the day of the Barricades, during the minority of Lewis XIV. saw a burgher with a gorget on which was engraved the figure of the parricide, with the inscription—Saint Jaques Clement.

(4) **Nor fleeting joys.]** Here the Poet seems to hint at Purgatory. No Roman Catholic controversialist can give a more ample account of it than Virgil in his sixth book. When reason set up against faith, it is surprising it did not cry down Hell instead of Purgatory.

(5) **The People's Father.]** Many Princes have acquired the name of Great: one only that of Father of the People. 'Twas to Louis de la Tremoille, who had defeated
and

and taken him, at the battle of St. Aubin, when he was Duke of Orleans, that this Prince said on his accession to the throne, "The King of France does not avenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans." The Emperor Adrian's expression to his enemy, on the same occasion, is as sublime, and more pointed, "Now you are safe." His memory will be ever dear to France whatever may be its government. He is accused of avarice, yet without injuring the Crown he reduced the taxes to one half; such was the avarice of the Father of his People. "Never," says St. Gelain, "had France such good times as under him." But the good king, who had married Mary sister to Henry VIII. of England, to please his young wife, changed his way of living. He dined at twelve instead of eight, and used to be up at midnight instead of being in bed at six (Hist. de Bayard): after being married six weeks he died at Paris, 1st January 1515, aged 53, and is buried at St. Denis.

(6) Amboise.] About this time died George D'Amboise, deservedly esteemed by the king and by the people, because he had an equal affection for them both. (Mezeray.)

(7) The Maid.] Jane D'Arc, the Maid of Orleans, born at the village of Dom Remi upon the Meuse. A servant at an Inn; her bodily strength and her courage were extraordinary; she was brought forward by the Count De Dunois to restore the fortunes of Charles VII. She was taken in a sortie from Compeigne, condemned as a witch by an ecclesiastical tribunal at Rouen, and burned by the English, who ought to have paid another tribute to the bravery of their foe.

(8) Montmorency.] A volume would not contain the history of the great men of his name and the services they rendered to the state.

(9) Tremoille.] Among the many great men of his name, the Poet here alludes to Guy de la Tremoille, surnamed the Valiant, who bore the oriflame (the sacred standard), and refused the sword of constable under Charles VI.

(10) Clisson.] Oliver Clisson, Constable of France under Charles VI.

(11) De Foix.] Gaston de Foix, Duke de Nemours, nephew to Lewis XII. On the morning of Easter Sunday, 11th of April, 1512, the Duke of Nemours gave the famous battle of Ravenna, in which the enemy's army was cut to pieces. After
he

He had gained the battle, in which he had received 14 wounds, in charging a body of Spaniards who were retreating in good order, he fell in his 23d year.

(12) Geusclin.] He saved France under Charles V. conquered Castille, placed Henry de Transtamare on the throne of Peter the Cruel, and was Constable of France and Castille.

(13) Bayard.] Pierre du Terrail, the Knight, without fear and without reproach. Francis the I. received the order of Knighthood from him on the field of battle at Marignan. He was killed in the retreat of Rebec in Italy, in 1523. As he lay under a tree with his face purposely to the enemy and his eyes on the hilt of his sword which formed a cross, the Marquis De Piscaire, the enemy's general, and the Constable of Bourbon, who had abandoned his country, visited him with every mark of respect. The latter expressing his esteem and his pity for him. "I thank you, my lord, exclaimed the Knight, I do not need it—I die doing my duty—I pity you who have betrayed your's.

(14) The first offspring.] Lewis XIII. son to Henry IV. father to Lewis XIV. died 1643.

(15) Richelieu.] Armand de Vignerod, Bishop of Luçon, Cardinal de Richelieu born in 1584. began his political fortune under the patronage of the Mareschal D'Ancre, and after his death completed it under that of his rival the Duke de Luines.—During near twenty years he governed France with absolute authority and uncommon ability. To all the tempests through which he rose, he opposed a violent and determined spirit. Many conspiracies were formed against his life and many victims sacrificed to it; among them the son of the great historian de Thou shared the fate of his friend Cinq Mars for not having betrayed his secret. During these latter troubles and intrigues, the cardinal, and Lewis XIII. who hated him because he could not do without him, were both at the point of death; and it is said, the cardinal used to paint, to give himself an air of health before the king, who wished for his death. He died in Paris, in 1642, 4th December, aged 58, and was interred in the church of the Sorbonne, where he had a magnificent monument, the masterpiece of Girardon, lately removed to the national collection. The nation gained 200,000 pounds a year by his death, which was allotted for his maintenance, a great sum in those days, but it lost a great minister. He was a patron of literature, and jealous of literary fame even to littleness.

" Nullius

"Nullius in locum preter laudem avarus."—The Palais Royal was built by him, and called Le Palais Cardinal; he left it to the king, it afterwards passed to the House of Orleans, and is now the property of the French Republic.—The families of D'Aiguillon and Richelieu are collateral descendants from this great man.—When the Czar Peter visited his tomb, he clasped his statue in his arms, and, in his enthusiasm for all that was great, exclaimed "Why are you not alive? you should have half my kingdom for governing the other half." To his power in the Cabinet succeeded, the very day he died,—

(16) Mazarin,] Jules de. A man of talents, as great, but as different, as nature could form them. Born, 1602. Created Cardinal, 1641. Appeared first in the political world in 1630, minister from the Duke of Savoie to Lewis XIII. He had the wisdom to pursue all the plans of Richelieu, and enjoyed the whole confidence of Anne of Austria during the minority of Lewis XIV.; he yielded prudently to every storm his intrigues could not divert, and seems to have worn out the ill humour of the people, and of the parliaments, by his perseverance; for after being frequently exiled and proscribed, he returned to Paris, 3d Feb. 1653, and people and parliament received him with acclamations of joy. Died at Vincennes, 9th March 1661, aged 59. His name and fortune descended to the Marquis de la Meilleraie, the husband of Hortensia Mancini, his niece, who took the title of Duke of Mazarin. The first national assembly, in the paroxysm of its zeal against court abuse, seized the estates of this family, blended in that of Monaco. The Duke of Nivernois is descended from a nephew of the Cardinal of the name of Mancini. He also was a protector of letters, and left his library to the college de Mazarin, which he founded.—Mazarin's temper was as mild as Richelieu's was fiery. His mind was less extensive, but more methodical; less strong, but more pliant; less capable of bold ideas, but less liable to false ones. His politics had more of cunning, than of genius; of patience, than of vigour. His talent was the knowledge of mankind; his principle, that force was the last means to be resorted to.—Richelieu was hated, Mazarin laughed at;—but both were masters of the kingdom. One of his greatest services was his having prepared the confidence of the king for—

{17} Colbert.] Said to have been of Scotch origin. The prosperity and glory of Lewis XIV. the greatness of the King and the happiness of the People, should have rendered the name of Colbert for ever dear to France. Yet such was the injustice of the people, their hatred pursued even his body in the grave. Under his administration
the

the arts acquired that degree of splendor which made the reign of Lewis XIV. the most brilliant epocha of the French Monarchy, convinced that the fine arts alone can raise and immortalize an empire, he encouraged them from reason more than from enthusiasm.—*Par negotiis nec supra.*

(18) 'Tis Lewis.] Lewis XIV. born at St. Germain en Laye, 5th September 1638, came to the throne 1643, died Sunday, 1st Sept. 1715.

(19) Ye sons of science.] The academy of Sciences esteemed through all Europe instituted under Lewis XIV. 1666, confirmed by letters patent 1713.

(20) Condé.] - Louis de Bourbon the great Condé, and Henry Vicomte de Turenne, are looked upon as the two greatest captains of their age. The genius of Condé appeared greater on the day of battle, that of Turenne in the conducting of a campaign. Turenne, when these two great men were opposed to one another, gained many advantages over Condé—at Arras, the Dunes, &c. But who will pronounce which was the greater man?

(21) Turenne.] Turenne was killed by a cannon-ball 27th July 1675, near Salzbac, aged 64, and buried at St. Denis! I will never believe, says Madame de Sevigny, but that the cannon which killed Turenne was charged from all eternity.

Condé died at Fontainebleau 11th December 1688, aged 66.

(22) Catinat.] Born 1637. It is said he was first a lawyer and quitted that profession on losing a cause which he knew to be just. He gained the battles of Staffard and Marfaille, resigned his command without regret, never complained, and never asked for any thing. He died a philosopher as he had lived, at a small country house at St. Gratien.

(23) Vauban.] Mareschal de, born 1633, the greatest engineer that ever lived; he fortified after his own method 300 old places, built 33 new ones, conducted 53 sieges, and was present at 140 battles.

(24) Luxembourg.] Francis Henry de Montmorency, mareschal, duke and peer of France. Gained the battles of Mons, Fleurus, Steinkirke, Nerwinde, &c. conquered provinces

provinces for his king, was shut up in the Bastile by the minister, and received every sort of mortification from the court.

(25) Villars.] Was still alive when the poem was written. Gained the battle of Freidling and the first battle of Hochsted or Blenheim, on the same ground as Marlborough occupied afterwards when he gained the glorious victory of Blenheim. He commanded at Malplaquet, where his army was victorious until he was wounded and obliged to quit the field. After gaining many other victories, he negotiated the peace of Radstat with prince Eugene whom he had beaten.

(26) What Youth.] Lewis duke of Burgundy, grandson to Lewis XIV. father of Lewis XV. born 6th June 1682, died 8th February 1712. His wife, Maria Adelaide Savoie, died six days before him aged 26, their eldest son a few days after, and Lewis XV. was dangerously ill at the same time.

Lewis the XV. was educated by the mild and prudent Cardinal de Fleury, who was prime minister during the first years of his reign.

(27) Next to the royal youth.] The regent, great grandfather of the late unhappy Duke of Orleans. His character cannot be better given or with more truth than in the poem; he gave the rare and happy example of a quiet regency. His care of the person of the young King is the best answer to the calumnies which he was exposed to.

(28) Deep thunders roll'd.] The latter part of the vision alludes to the extinction of the Spanish branch of the house of Austria, and the accession of the house of Bourbon to that throne.



ARGUMENT.

**THE young Count D'Egmont is sent by Philip II. King of Spain, to the aid of
Mayne and the League.—Battle of Ivry.—Triumph and clemency of Henry the
Great.**



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO VIII.

NO more those States where mad confusion reign'd
Their wonted pride and arrogance retain'd ;
Their councils waver'd : Bourbon's name alone
Baffled their wild attempts upon the throne.
The daunted League by pride and terror sway'd,
Fearful alike, to crown him, or degrade,
On Mayne anew, that rank and power bestow'd,
Which not to them or their decrees he ow'd.

5

Second where none was first (1), in power supreme,
That king without the sceptre and the name,
Still by his arts the willing crowd allur'd,
Still in his cause their boundless zeal secur'd.
With trembling hope to council he invites
Those fierce avengers of his fancied rights,
Lorraine, Nemours (2), La Chatre, Canillac,
St. Pol, inconstant Joyeuse, and Brissac ;

10

15

Meagre

Meagre and worn, their blood in battle drain'd,
 Scarcely their tott'ring limbs the chiefs sustain'd;
 But pain and famine, and the blood they shed,
 In their dark souls the thirst of vengeance fed. 20
 They met: and in their wild, distracted air
 Was wounded pride, and scorn, and mad despair;
 Around their chief with eager haste they pour'd,
 And swore revenge upon the lifted sword.
 So from Olympus and Thessalia's plain, 25
 The giant sons of earth, an impious train,
 Heap'd rocks on rocks, and blindly, vainly strove
 To shake, with mortal war, the throne of Jove.
 Discord still hov'ring near, their councils heard,
 Burst from her cloud and to their eyes appear'd. 30
 " Rejoice! rejoice! the promis'd aid is nigh,
 Now, now my sons, you conquer or you die."
 D'Aumale first caught the chearing sound; and Mayne
 Beheld afar th' approaching host of Spain.
 Wide o'er those plains their glitt'ring arms appear'd, 35
 Where Gallia's monarchs rest in death rever'd:
 The sparkling blaze they darted thro' the sky,
 Seem'd with the radiance of the sun to vie.
 To greet the strangers joyful crowds advance,
 And bless the saviours of their faith and France. 40
 D'Egmont (3) their chief, by low ambition led
 To kiss the hand, by which his father bled;
 The father's soul with patriot ardor glow'd,
 His blood for injur'd Flanders nobly flow'd:

He,

He, slave of courts, in glory's field untaught,
 His greatness in his country's ruin sought,
 Betray'd her rights, and yet for rebels fought.
 Fierce of his aid, with rash, intemp'rate pride,
 Mayne once again his sov'reign's pow'r defied.
 What transport Henry in thy bosom rose
 To view the senseless courage of thy foes !
 How was thy soul with gen'rous hope elate,
 With one great blow to fix thy country's fate.

45 }
 }
 }

50

Where Iton flows (4) and Eure her current bends,
 By partial nature blest, a plain extends
 Where Flora smil'd, and fruitful Ceres reign'd ;
 Long from the happy spot had war refrain'd :
 There tranquil shepherds spent their happy hours
 Nor heard the tumult of contending powers :
 No treasures there, rapacious force allur'd,
 But Heav'n and poverty the weak secur'd.
 'Tis there the hostile armies bent their course,
 And Eure and Iton trembled to their source ;
 The nymphs and swains desert the peaceful cot,
 Weep o'er their babes, and curse their alter'd lot.

55

60

65

Ye nymphs and swains rebellion's fury blame,
 But 'midst your complaints pronounce not Henry's name ;
 To peace alone his martial labours tend,
 Your peace, your welfare are his only end :
 This day, tho' Ivry's plains shall stream with blood,
 His sword is lifted for his country's good.

70

Now

Now swift from rank to rank the monarch rode;
 His foaming steed exulting in his load,
 In scorn of danger paws the hollow plain,
 Champs on his bit and proudly shakes the rein. 75
 Bright with his fame and with his laurels crown'd,
 His partners in the field their chief surround;
 D'Aumont (5), the boast of five succeeding reigns;
 Biron (6), whose name unsullied still remains;
 And he (7), rash youth, the most ingrate of men 80
 Biron, who since—but he was virtuous then:
 Sully (8), Crillon, whose hearts with virtue glow,
 Esteem'd and hated by their rebel foe;
 Turenne (9), who since with youthful Bouillon's hand
 Assum'd her name, and her supreme command; 85
 Sedan not long his virtuous reign enjoy'd,
 When Armand's jealous rule his power destroy'd.
 Proudly young Essex on the plain appears;
 As the tall palm its tufted branches rears
 High o'er the native produce of our earth, 90
 And seems exulting in its foreign birth:
 Diamonds and gold upon his helmet glow'd,
 Valour's reward, by royal love bestow'd;
 Proud fate! a sov'reign's heart his merit gain'd,
 A sov'reign's rights his youthful sword maintain'd. 95
 There too Tremoille, Clermont, Feuquieres,
 Unhappy Nesle and happy Lesdiguieres (10).
 D'Ailly unconscious of approaching fate.
 Impatient round their chief the heroes wait.

The

The monarch's looks exultingly express 100

The certain presage of the day's success.

Not so Mayenne : uncertain and appall'd,

His heart surpris'd, in vain its force recall'd.

Whether within his conscious soul he found

That Heav'n at length upon injustice frown'd ; 105

Whether 'tis given to human minds to know

By secret instinct, the approaching woe.

Superior still to all that nature feels,

His boding soul a cheering smile conceals ;

His words, his actions, in his troops awake 110

The hopes deceitful which his heart forsake.

D'Egmont, whose soul with youthful ardor burns,

His anxious care with haughty rashness spurns,

Panting for war.—As when the trumpet sounds,

From Thracia's meads th' impatient courser bounds, 115

His eyes on fire, erect his bristling mane,

Springs from the earth and wildly scorns the rein.

So to the charge impetuous D'Egmont flies ;

Rage swells his heart, and sparkles in his eyes :

At glory's call his dauntless soul elate, 120

Presumes, vain youth, his genius governs fate ;

Blinded by pride, unconscious that his doom

On Ivry's plain prepar'd an early tomb.

Now on the League th' embattled ranks advance,

And Henry thus (11) : " Ye noble sons of France, 125

Behold your king ; behold his rebel foes !

Mark the white plume which from my helmet flows ;

A a

Make

Make it your guide thro' this tempestuous day,
Foremost in honor's path it leads the way."

Prophetic triumph fir'd them as he spoke, 130
They charge, and God's eternal name invoke.

On either side beneath their chiefs advance,
In direful shock, the sons of wretched France.
Thus thro' the straits Alcides' labour binds,
From the steep rocks rush down opposing winds, 135
The meeting storms the surgy billows rear,
Whole oceans rise contending in the air :
Darken'd the sun---earth trembles, thunders roar,
Expiring nature Afric's sons deplore.

What hell and war can give, their weapons join'd, 140
With murd'rous steel destructive flame combin'd.

First from Bayonne the double vengeance came,
And still the dire invention bears her name.

In horrid conflict now the squadrons close,
To valour, valour; art to art oppose; 145

The cry of death and rage the welkin rends,
Fury with fear, with honor pain contends :

In vain the brave resist, the coward flies,
Pierc'd by the brother's hand, the brother dies.

Nature recoils to see the crimson flood, 150
And earth reluctant drinks congenial blood.

Thro' wrecks of squadrons and expiring foes
And threat'ning ranks which hostile spears oppose,

With force resistless, Bourbon breaks his way.

But Mornay (12), calm amid the dread affray, 155
Moves

Moves like his guardian genius by his side :
 Like gods of old in human forms belied,
 Who, from the realms of endless rest above,
 On Phrygian plains in mortal combat strove ;
 Or the wing'd messengers of heav'nly ire,
 Who, borne on whirlwinds, wrapt in vengeful fire,
 Act the dread sentence of some guilty land.

160

So, Mornay bore the hero's high command ;
 Rapid as air, to wav'ring legions brought,
 The sure decisions of superior thought,
 Which fix at once the fortune of the field,
 And like one man unnumber'd legions wield.

165

Averse to war, to Stoic virtue true,
 To save his king alone his sword he drew ;
 The blood of man the spotless weapon spar'd,
 Nor gave the death his tranquil courage dar'd.

170

With death and terror D'Ailly fill'd the plain,
 D'Ailly, of thirty years of warfare vain ;
 To him, the horrors of domestic strife
 Gave youthful vigour in declining life :
 His arm one warrior only dares oppose,
 One in whose bosom equal ardor glows ;
 Untry'd in arms, scarce ripen'd into man,
 That bloody day his bright career began.

175

Love form'd the youth for ev'ry tender joy,
 And Hymen smil'd upon the blooming boy ;
 But scorning all that youth and beauty gave,
 He sigh'd for glory 'midst the great and brave.

180

How did his bride that day the League deplore,
 As her soft hands his heavy cuirass bore,
 And cloath'd his tender limbs in horrid steel;
 What anguish did her heaving bosom feel!
 How trickl'd down his casque the briny tear,
 Which hid that face so lovely and so dear.

185

Soon D'Ailly's prowess his attention drew,
 To meet a rival o'er the plain he flew;
 Thro' heaps confus'd of dying and of dead,
 Whirlwinds of dust and fields with slaughter red,
 Furious they drive their steeds impetuous course,
 Till midway closing with unbridl'd force,
 Earth echoes with the shock, and whizzing high
 Aloft in air their shiver'd lances fly.

190

195

As when two summer clouds, thro' heav'n's expanse,
 Pregnant with flame, their adverse fronts advance;
 They meet---blue lightnings from their bosom dart,
 And dire explosion stuns the human heart.

200

Swift from their steeds th' impatient warriors vault,
 Their clashing swords their adverse bosoms sought.
 Discord and war the horrid contest view,
 And Death stood by with pale and bloody hue.
 Cease, hapless warriors cease, that rage restrain!
 But fate impels! the warning voice is vain:
 Their ruthless hands the crimson torrent dies,
 Beneath their swords the plated cuirass flies;
 Their helmets sparkle as the blades descend,
 Thro' ev'ry fold the massy bucklers bend;

205

210

Uncou-

Unconscious at what heart their fury aims,
 No vulgar hate their gen'rous soul inflames,
 Charm'd with the valor which a foe displays,
 Each views his mighty rival with amaze. 215
 But now from D'Ailly's arm a deadly blow
 Lays prostrate at his feet his unknown foe.
 He falls—his eyes eternal shadows close,
 His youthful face his rolling helmet shows;
 And D'Ailly sees—Oh horror! Oh remorse! 220
 He sees his son—a breathless mangl'd corse!
 Despair and frantic rage his soul possess,
 His guilty sword he turn'd upon his breast.
 Scarce from the scene of woe by force remov'd,
 In sullen grief to distant worlds he rov'd, 225
 Cursing the fame his fatal sword had won,
 The hated hand that robb'd him of his son.
 To man, to honor, to ambition dead,
 In wilds and caves his wretched self he fled;
 There, when the sun begins his bright career, 230
 His child's sad name the woods and mountains hear;
 There, when the western waves his labours bound,
 Tir'd echo still repeats the dismal sound.
 Trembling for all next heav'n her soul ador'd,
 The field of blood his youthful bride explor'd, 235
 'Mid the wide scene of death, her anxious view
 Too soon the features of her lover knew;
 Silent, transfix'd in senseless grief she stood,
 A chilling damp her fainting limbs bedew'd:

" Is this, alas ! " --- But, lost in bursting sighs, 240
 On her pale lip the broken accent dies :
 As life return'd she sought a last embrace,
 Prest to her lips his pallid, ghastly face,
 Clasp'd his cold body, and in wild despair
 Breath'd in a kiss her tender soul in air. 245

Oh ! dreadful monument of civil strife,
 Ill-fated mortals --- husband --- father --- wife !
 May future ages with a wholesome tear
 The dismal story of this combat hear ;
 May they, while gen'rous pity melts their breast, 250
 Their fathers fury and their crimes detest.

But see the League ! --- Its broken squadrons yield :
 Who, more than mortal drives them o'er the field ?
 From Biron's youthful arm they shrink dismay'd.
 Hark ! hear D'Aumale the dastard bands upbraid : 255
 " Back to the field --- What pale-fac'd coward flies ?
 Are you the men who fought with Mayne and Guise ?
 Follow D'Aumale, recall your former deeds,
 Forward ! you're sure to conquer where he leads."
 Fir'd with the hero's words, Beauveau, Fosseuse, 260
 St. Pol, for boldness fam'd --- for zeal, Joyeuse,
 Their rallied squadrons with the chief unite,
 Revive their spirit, and renew the fight.
 False fortune changes to the rebels' side,
 Biron in vain resists the whelming tide : 265
 See brave De Nesle expiring at his feet ;
 A soldier's fate D'Angenne and Clermont meet.

Wounded,

Wounded, o'erpower'd, unable to contend---
 Oh! had his fate decreed that glorious end,
 How spotless in the long records of fame,
 Had France still glory'd in her Biron's name.

270

But Bourbon's eye th' unequal fight survey'd,
 He flies with gen'rous haste to Biron's aid.
 The king with warmth the youthful hero lov'd,
 Not coldly with a monarch's pride approv'd;
 Henry ne'er thought that friendship could degrade,
 Nor that a look a subject's blood o'erpaid:
 His manly soul with purest friendship glow'd,
 Best gift of heav'n, on noblest minds bestow'd.
 Friendship, long banish'd from th' ungrateful throne,
 A bliss to scepter'd selfishness unknown.
 Swift to his aid he flew, affection's charm
 Lent wings to speed, and terror to his arm.
 The monarch's voice his parting soul recall'd;
 The swarm of foes, the monarch's sword appall'd:
 The life thy king preserv'd, ungrateful youth,
 Shou'd pay the debt to loyalty and truth.

275

280

285

A noise like thunder thro' the plain was heard,
 Discord tremendous fresh from hell appear'd;
 The hollow blast her lifted trumpet blew,
 The scatter'd League around her standard drew.
 Well to D'Aumale th' infernal sound was known,
 Long had his fury sought the king alone;
 But rallied by the peal which Discord rung,
 Thousands at once upon the monarch sprung.

290

295

Thus

Thus on the hardy tenant of the wood
 Springs the fierce pack, by man train'd up to blood;
 Their rage redoubl'd by the sounding horn,
 Danger, and death, and toil, alike they scorn;
 The deep-ton'd thunder fills the woods around, 300
 And hills, and rocks, and caves, return the sound.
 The saint, who from above his danger view'd,
 With more than mortal strength his son endu'd;
 Firm as the rock which nature's fury braves,
 Turns the dark tempest and repels the waves. 305
 What heaps of dead Eure's blushing current bore,
 What heros fell upon her winding shore!
 Thou spirit of the bravest, best of kings,
 Inspire the trembling muse, for thee she sings:
 Say with what zeal his noble chiefs advance, 310
 To die for him who fights for them and France.
 His sword again spread terror and defeat,
 His fatal rage when D'Egmont dar'd to meet:
 Rash stranger! long with youthful ardor vain,
 He sought the monarch thro' th' embattl'd plain; 315
 What in the great attempt tho' life were lost,
 He deem'd the glory equal to the cost.
 "Come, Bourbon! come, augment thy fame," he cried,
 "Advance, and let our swords this day decide."
 Scarce had his lips pronounc'd the daring thought, 320
 Foreboding lightnings rent the heav'nly vault,
 The Judge of combat bid his thunders roar,
 Earth trembling own'd the God from shore to shore.

" Mine

" Mine be the omen ! " D'Egmont cries.---His mind
 The cause of Heav'n with his ambition join'd, 325
 And proudly deem'd th' eternal bolts were hurl'd
 To spread his future glory to the world.
 Heav'ns ! how he triumph'd when the crimson tide
 From Henry's breast (13) his daring weapon dy'd !
 No weak alarm the wounded hero knew, 330
 His courage with increasing danger grew ;
 His lofty soul exulted to engage
 A rival worthy of a monarch's rage ;
 With force collected darting on his foe,
 His steady arm address'd a surer blow : 335
 Stung with his wound and furious from the smart,
 He plung'd the shining blade in D'Egmont's heart,
 Whose angry soul sunk down to endless night,
 And fled abash'd his father's angry sprite.
 Warriors whose valour was Iberia's boast, 340
 Then 'twas that fear first reach'd your gen'rous host.
 Their laurels drooping with their hero slain,
 From rank to rank surprise and terror gain ;
 No leader's voice was heard, no troops obey'd,
 Soldiers and chiefs, confounded and dismay'd, 345
 In wild disorder o'er the country spread,
 With cries unmanly from their standard fled.
 These, to the victor's chain their hands extend,
 And prostrate at his feet inglorious bend ;
 These, from his rage to Eure's deep current run, 350
 And rush upon the fate they sought to shun.

With slaughter choak'd, with bloody torrents soil'd,
Back on her source the frightened stream recoil'd.

Mayne, in the wreck superior to his fate,
Fear'd not, but deeply felt his wretched state; 355

His anxious eyes he cast around the field,
To see what good the sad reverse might yield:
" By Heav'n betray'd, of friends, of hope bereft,
Death," cries D'Aumale, " is all the good that's left."

" Cease," Mayne replied, " rash youth, that rage restrain, 360
Live, and make Fortune spend her shafts in vain;

Beaten, do more than Coligny could dare,
Rally our chiefs, our broken hopes repair;
The scatter'd fragments of the war collect,
Behind our walls the trembling herd protect." 365

He heard in sullen silence and obey'd,
And wept his fate unwillingly delay'd:
As some fierce lion, by his keeper tam'd,
Forgets with him, what rage his veins inflam'd,
Fawns on his hand, but e'en as he obeys 370
A threat'ning look his native rage betrays.

Now was the monarch's victory complete,
The League defenceless crouch'd beneath his feet;
Heav'n open'd wide; the bright ætherial space
Shew'd Lewis with the heroes of his race, 375

Anxious that mercy should adorn his name,
And glorying in their son's unrivall'd fame.
His troops around with boding looks pursue
The captive victims to their vengeance due;

Silent

Silent the trembling crew around him wait, 380
 And from their conqueror's eye, expect their fate.
 Despair and shame was painted in their look,
 Their pallid limbs with guilty terror shook:
 Pensive the hero view'd the moving scene,
 While pity soften'd his majestic mien. 385
 "Be free," he cried, "on you the choice depends,
 Remain my enemies, or be my friends;
 Subjects to me, or slaves beneath the League,
 By justice rul'd, or tools of vile intrigue;
 Weigh Mayne's ambition with your monarch's claim, 390
 And judge who best deserves a sov'reign's name."
 The hero ceas'd—the crowd with wonder view'd,
 Passion and power by clemency subdu'd;
 The captive squadrons hail the happy hour,
 Bless the defeat which gave them to his power; 395
 False zeal and hatred from their souls depart,
 Force bow'd their necks, but mercy won their heart.
 Rang'd with the banners which so late they dar'd,
 Their crimes were venial, with their zeal compar'd.
 The gen'rous victor sheath'd the bloody steel, 400
 The charms of mercy now his squadrons feel;
 In terror cloth'd, and red with blood, no more
 His arm from rank to rank destruction bore;
 But like some God who lays his thunder down,
 He calms the tempest, smooths the gloomy frown, 405
 Wipes the big blood-drop from his awful brow,
 Smiles on the earth and waves the olive-bough.

'Twas not enough in fields of death to save,
 Bourbon prolongs the life his mercy gave ;
 A father's care to ev'ry rank extends, 410
 Relieves the wretched, and the weak defends.
 Now the swift messenger of truth and lies,
 Whose empty bulk increases as she flies;
 Whose wings out-strip the tardy flight of Time,
 Who fills the world, and darts from clime to clime; 415
 The monster form'd of mouths, of eyes, and ears,
 Round whom credulity, and hopes, and fears,
 And gaping curiosity await;
 Who, spreads the shame and honor of the great,
 Lifts the clear trump whence glory takes its birth, 420
 And Henry's triumph echoes thro' the earth :
 From Tagus to the Po the voice was heard,
 The frozen north the monarch's glory cheer'd :
 Rome trembl'd as she own'd her rival's fame ;
 Spain heard the sound with sorrow, fear, and shame. 425
 Then how the League, how wretched Paris griev'd !
 Ye priests, deceivers, ye weak crowd, deceiv'd ;
 How are your foreheads humbl'd to the ground,
 Shame thro' your temples, and despair, resound.
 Does Mayne again, with groundless hope replete, 430
 With flatt'ring tales disguise his sad defeat ?
 Vain care---Truth mocks the shallow statesman's art,
 Speaks from each tongue and freezes ev'ry heart.
 But Discord, stung with tenfold fury, cried,
 " No, no, my work shall never be destroy'd : 435
 For

For this, with crimes unheard was Paris fill'd ;
For this, the venom which my breath distill'd ;
For this, the flames I light, the blood I shed,
To place the Gallic crown on Henry's head !
Great as he is, unconquer'd in the field,
Who foils my power---to softer art shall yield :
Bourbon no conqu'ror but himself can own ;
I'll seek that conqu'ror in his heart alone."
She spoke ! a blood-stain'd car the monster bore,
By hatred led, from Seine's unhappy shore ;
Wrapt in a cloud, to Love they bent their flight,
The sun turn'd pale and sicken'd at the sight.

440

445





NOTES

TO

CANTO VIII.

(1) **SECOND** where none was first.] Mayne, who possessed more than kingly power, did not dare assume the name, but got himself created Lieutenant General of the kingdom by that part of the Parliament which still remained attached to him.

(2) The Duke de Nemours, half-brother to the Duke de Mayne, of the house of Lorraine.

La Chatre, one of the League's mareschals, who were ludicrously called Bastards who would one day be legitimated at the expence of their father: he made his peace with Henry on condition of being confirmed in his dignity.

Joyeuse, already mentioned, Canto IV. Note (1).

St. Pol, a soldier of fortune, known by his excessive violence; he was killed by the Duke de Guise son of the Balafre.

Brissac threw himself into the League from resentment against Henry III. who said he was good for nothing, either by sea or land: he negotiated secretly with Henry and opened the gates of Paris to him on condition of being made Mareschal of France. His descendant was governor of Paris at the Revolution 1789. See Note (12), Canto II.

(3) The count D'Egmont, son of the Admiral who was beheaded at Bruxelles with the Prince de Horn by Philip II. The son remained in the interest of Philip and was sent by him with 1500 lances to the succour of the Duke of Mayne and the League. Among the compliments paid him by the rebels on his entrance into Paris were some on the patriotism of his father: "Do not mention him," he cried, "he was a rebel and deserved the death he met."

(4) Where Iton flows.] The battle of Ivry was fought in a plain between the rivers Iton and Eure, 14th March 1590.

(5) D'Aumont.]

(5) D'Aumont.] Jean—mareschal of France, who distinguished himself at the battle of Ivry, was the son of Pierre D'Aumont, gentleman of the bed-chamber, and Frances de Sully heiress of the ancient house of Sully. He served under Henry II. Francis II. Charles IX. Henry III. and Henry IV.

(6) Biron.] Henry Gontaud, mareschal of France, grand master of the artillery. He commanded the reserve at Ivry and contributed much to the victory. He said to Henry the Fourth, on the field of battle, "Sire, you have done what Biron should have done, and Biron has done what the King should have done."

(7) And he.] His son, Charles Gontaud de Biron, mareschal, duke, and peer; whose life Henry saved at the battle of Fontaine Française. He conspired against him, and was beheaded in the court of the Bastile in 1602. When the Bastile was destroyed I saw the iron work of his scaffold still in the walls.

(8) Rosny, Duc de Sully. See Notes, Canto I. Page 23 and 24.

Crillon, surnamed the Brave—he offered Henry to fight the Duke de Guise. To Crillon Henry IV wrote—"Hang yourself, brave Crillon, we fought at Arques and you were not there: adieu, brave Crillon, right or wrong I must love you."

(9) Turenne.] Henry de la Tour D'Orliques, viscount de Turenne, mareschal of France. Henry IV. married him to Charlotte de la Mark princess of Sedan in 1591. The very night of his wedding he took Stenay by assault. His son, condemned to death under Lewis XIII. for the part he took in Cinq Mar's conspiracy against Armand Cardinal de Richelieu, gave up the sovereignty of Sedan to save his life.

(10) Lesdiguières.] No man ever better deserved the name of happy: he began as a private soldier and ended by being constable of France under Lewis XIII.

(11) Henry thus.] These were, as nearly as I could express them in rhyme, the very words of Henry when he charged at the head of his noblesse at Ivry—"Rally by my white plume; you will see it always on the road of honour and glory."

(12) Mornay.] See Notes, Canto I. Page 23 and 24. He had two horses killed under him at this battle and really possessed all the coolness for which he is here remarked.

(13) From Henry's breast.] It was not at Ivry, but at the battle of Aumale that Henry was wounded—he placed in his own guards the soldier who wounded him. Mornay on this occasion wrote to him—"Sire, you have been Alexander long enough, it is time to become Cæsar.—It is our business to die for your Majesty; your glory, Sire, and I will presume to say it, your duty is to live for us."

CANTO



ARGUMENT.

DESCRIPTION of the Palace of Love.—Dispard implores his aid to bend the unconquerable courage of Henry IV.—Description of Gabrielle D'Etree.—Henry, passionately enamoured with her, quits his army, and loses the advantages of his victory at Ivry. Mornay seeks him in his retreat, tears him from the arms of his mistress, and restores him to his army.



THE

HENRIADE.

CANTO IX.

WHERE fam'd Idalia's (1) blissful plains extend,
As Europe's bounds begin and Asia's end,
An ancient palace stands, by Time rever'd :
Nature herself the first rude fabric rear'd ;
But soon disdaining Nature's simple taste, 5
Intruding Art the modest structure grac'd.
No tyrant Winter there despoil'd the grove,
Silenc'd the feather'd warblers notes of love ;
Or bound the murm'ring rill in icy chains :
Eternal verdure crown'd those happy plains. 10
No labour earth requir'd, no season knew,
Unbid by men the smiling harvest grew ;
Round the ripe fruit the timid blossom twin'd,
And Flora's presents with Pomona's join'd.
Not wanton Nature when her reign began, 15
Such blessings lavish'd on her fav'rite man ;

The thoughtless joy which from abundance flows,
Days without care, and nights of soft repose :
All that deludes the mind and charms the sense,
All Eden once could boast---but Innocence.

20

Sweet music wafted on the balmy breeze,
Invited languor and voluptuous ease ;
While am'rous lays in dulcet notes proclaim
The lover's triumph, and the fair one's shame.

There, to the laughing God, in flow'rs array'd,
The graceful throng their daily homage paid,
And study'd at his shrine the fatal art
To please, seduce, and captivate the heart.

25

Young Hope, in flatt'ring smiles for ever gay,
To Love's mysterious altar leads the way :
The Graces round, half-veil'd and half in sight,
Enticing motion with their voice unite ;

30

While Indolence, luxurious, stretch'd along,
Listless and loit'ring, listens to the song.

There, silent Myst'ry, with the veil she wears,
And eyes conversing with the soul, appears ;
Attentive tender Cares, and Sports, and Smiles,
And wanton Mirth, and all that thought beguiles ;
Lascivious pleasures, group'd with graceful ease,
With soft Desires that more than Pleasure please.

35

40

Such the delightful entrance of the dome :
But farther, if with guardless step you roam
And thro' the deep recess audacious pry,
What alter'd scenes of mis'ry strike your eye !

No

No pleasures form'd in playful groups invite, 45
No dulcet sounds the ravish'd ears delight;
No tender cares:---But in their place appear
Sullen Complaint, and cloy'd Disgust, and Fear;
There, fever'd Jealousy with livid hue,
Unwinds with falt'ring steps Suspicion's clew; 50
Arm'd with the blood-stain'd instruments of death,
There, Rage and Hatred spread their poison'd breath;
While Malice, brooding over secret guile,
Repayes their labours with a treach'rous smile;
Remorse, that never sleeps, brings up their rear, 55
Hates his own deeds, and drops a barren tear.

There, Love, capricious child, has fix'd his reign,
With Pains and Pleasures for his motley train;
Cruel and kind by turns, but ever blind,
That dear delight, that torment of mankind, 60
Thro' ev'ry camp, thro' ev'ry senate glides,
Commands the warrior, o'er the judge presides;
Still welcome to the heart, he still deceives,
Pants in each breast, and thro' all nature lives.

High on a throne, of endless conquest vain, 65
He bids the monarch drag his servile chain;
And glorying less to please, than to destroy,
In scenes of woe exults with savage joy.

Him, Discord sought, by rage relentless led;
The timid Pleasures knew the fiend, and fled; 70
Her eyes were fire, fresh blood her forehead dy'd,
Around she whirl'd her flaming torch, and cry'd:

“ Why

“ Why sleeps my brother o’er his poison’d darts ?
Where now his boasted power o’er human hearts ?
Did ever Love the flames of Discord waft, 75
Or Discord’s venom tinge Love’s deadly shaft ?
Did I for thee, bid madd’ning worlds engage ?
Arise, avenge my insults, serve my rage ;
Behold a conqu’ring king my pow’r defy !
Crush’d by his hand, behold my serpents die ! 80
See dove-ey’d Mercy smiling by his side,
His steps thro’ fields of civil slaughter guide ;
See to his standard ev’ry heart return ;
While I my falling empire vainly mourn :
Let him, let her, obtain one conquest more, 85
Paris is his, and Discord’s reign is o’er :
Her smiles will gild the triumph which he gains,
Then what is left for me but hopeless chains !
’Tis Love must turn this torrent from its course,
And soil his glories in their limpid source, 90
Spite of the virtues which adorn his mind,
In am’rous chains that haughty spirit bind.
Can Love forget what heroes once he charm’d,
Whom at her feet fair Omphale disarm’d ?
Whose purple sails before Augustus flew, 95
Who lost the world for Egypt’s queen and you ?
To these proud trophies Henry’s name unite,
Beneath your myrtles all his laurels blight :
You serve yourself, when you my throne maintain,
For Love and Discord must together reign.” 100
So

So spoke the monster, and the vaults around
 Trembling, cast back on earth the dreadful sound.
 Love heard, and answer'd with a doubtful smile,
 Where half was sweetness, half insidious guile:
 His golden quiver o'er his shoulder threw,
 And gliding soft thro' yielding azure flew.
 Pleasure, the Graces, and unthinking Sport,
 Borne by the Zephyrs, form'd his wanton court.

105

Pois'd on his even wings, he look'd with joy
 On Simois, and the plain where once was Troy;
 A smile the triumph of his heart betray'd,
 To see the mighty ruin Love had made.

110

On Venice, long were bent his partial eyes,
 From the blue main where gilded domes arise:
 Old Neptune view'd it piercing thro' the wave,
 Own'd the audacious conquest and forgave.

115

To fam'd Sicilia next his flight he bends,
 Stoops on his purple pinions, and descends
 Where he himself inspir'd the Mantuan swain,
 And taught Theocritus his tender strain;

120

There, Fame reports, by ways unknown, he led
 The am'rous stream (2) to Arethusa's bed;
 Now on his downy sails he seeks Vaucluse (3),
 Retreat of Petrarch's love and Petrarch's muse;

Fond Echo still remembers Laura's name,
 And what she gave in love repays in fame.

125

Eure's winding banks his fond attention draw,
 Where his own work, Anet's (4) proud dome, he saw;

The

The fretted roof still Henry's cypher grac'd,
 By Love himself with fair Diana's plac'd. 130
 The Graces dropt a crystal tear, and threw
 Around her urn fresh roses as they flew.

His wings at length on Ivry's plain he clos'd,
 Where Bourbon's thunder for a time repos'd;
 But as the natives of the wood he chas'd, 135
 His manly sports war's dreadful image trac'd.
 Love spread his chains, and sharp'ning ev'ry dart,
 Inhuman pleasure bounded in his heart.

" Arise ye winds," he cried, " the storm prepare,
 Collect the pregnant clouds, and dim the air; 140
 The hanging torrents from their bosoms pour,
 Bid forked lightnings fly, and thunders roar."
 The blust'ring slaves his will too soon obey'd,
 Their dusky pinions spread a moving shade;
 O'er Nature's charms dark low'ring mists they drove, 145
 She wept the change, and knew the work of Love.

Benighted and alone, the king pursu'd
 A light that glimmer'd thro' the distant wood:
 Love shook his torch, and cast the treach'rous ray,
 Like earth-born vapours glitt'ring to betray: 150
 Which lead the trav'ler to the fatal brink,
 Then leave him to his wretched doom and sink.

Fate so decreed, in this sequester'd spot,
 Retreat and calm, a noble fair-one sought;
 Far from the tumult of contending arms, 155
 A solitary castle hid her charms,

Her

Her tender form from all mankind conceal'd,
 While war detain'd her father in the field.
 But while his sov'reign's toil the vet'ran shar'd,
 His lovely child the fost'ring graces rear'd. 160
 D'Etree (5), (that name the favour'd mortal bore)
 Of ev'ry charm exhausted nature's store.
 Not on Eurota's banks, so beauteous shone
 The faithless partner (6) of the Spartan throne;
 Not she who conquer'd (7) whom the world obey'd, 165
 On Cydnus when in pomp of charms array'd,
 Mortals deceiv'd, in awful rapture gaz'd,
 And incense to the present goddess blaz'd.
 Scarce had she gain'd the charming dang'rous years,
 Too sure a sway, when rising passion bears. 170
 Pure as heav'n's image in the crystal deep,
 Ere clouds arise, when wanton zephyrs sleep;
 Her breast for love and gen'rous feeling form'd,
 No sigh had heav'd, no tender passion warm'd.
 In vain the beauties of the budding rose, 175
 From am'rous winds, its modest folds enclose;
 As vernal suns each timid charm display,
 It yields, and blushing, owns the genial ray.
 Love, treach'rous god, still fertile in deceit,
 Long sought the maid, yet seem'd by chance to meet. 180
 A shepherd's boy he came, in outward shew,
 His back no quiver bore, his hand no bow:
 Careless he cried,—but so that she might hear,
 " See Ivry's hero thro' our groves appear !

See Henry comes ! " but with his voice conveys 185
 A secret wish to see him, and to please.
 A conscious blush diffus'd a livelier hue,
 Love felt its charm, and glory'd in the view.
 Certain to triumph with such beauty's aid,
 Full in the monarch's sight he plac'd the maid : 190
 Around her dress he threw that careless air,
 It seem'd what Nature's self would choose to wear ;
 Her auburn locks in easy tresses play'd,
 Now hid her snowy neck, and now betray'd ;
 No muse can paint what playful zephyr show'd, 195
 Nor tell the charms which modesty bestow'd :
 Not the stiff airs which prudish virtue arm,
 The foes of love, the bane of ev'ry charm :
 Sweet, bashful grace, that bends the timid eye,
 Spreads o'er the glowing cheek a heav'nly dye, 200
 With soft respect Love's wildest transport blends
 And bliss celestial to his triumph lends.

But Love does more : for Love what pow'r can bound ?
 A charm invincible he calls around,
 Their tender boughs enchanted myrtles spread, 205
 Rise from the earth and wave their taper head :
 Deluded mortals seek their tempting shades,
 The secret charm their languid sense invades ;
 Around, a stream in lulling murmur flows,
 Of deep forgetfulness and soft repose ; 210
 Bound in his chains no more they seek to move ;
 Fame, honor, duty, what are you to Love ?

Here

Here all alike the sweet delusion share,
 And breathe delicious poison with the air.
 All whispers love, the birds on ev'ry spray 215
 Prolong the kiss, and swell the am'rous lay;
 The hardy swain, who with the peep of dawn,
 Jocund and careless sought the russet lawn,
 Heaves as he goes involuntary sighs;
 Unusual troubles in his breast arise, 220
 Beat in his pulse, his loit'ring feet retain;
 Neglected lye the treasures of the plain:
 The same soft charm the trembling maid deceives,
 The flocks forgot, the sheaf unbound she leaves.
 How could D'Etree with such a power contest! 225
 A god invincible her soul possess.
 In vain, alas! that fatal day she strove
 With youth, with glory, with her heart and love.
 In vain a rising voice in Henry's breast,
 Back to his ranks the love-lost hero prest; 230
 A pow'r unseen repell'd the gen'rous thought,
 His virtue vainly in himself he sought;
 His soul empassion'd, deaf to honor's call,
 Could hear but love, D'Etree possess'd it all.
 Meanwhile his chiefs, impatient on the plain, 235
 His absence mourn'd, and sought their king in vain;
 A thousand dangers for his life appear'd,
 But for his fame what danger could be fear'd?
 No hope of victory the troop inspir'd,
 Lost was their ardor when their chief retir'd. 240

But the good Genius of the realm was near,
To rouse their spirit and dispel their fear.
Summon'd by Lewis, from the realms of light
Downward the spirit shap'd his rapid flight,
Around this earthly planet cast his eyes, 245
To find below a mortal truly wise.
Not in the noisy school, or silent cell
Where prayer, and meagre fast, and study dwell;
But midst the tumult of the martial train,
With rest and conquest flush'd, on Ivry's plain, 250
Where Calvin's banners to the sky were rear'd,
The man he sought, the real sage appear'd.
Mornay was he.—Heav'n form'd the man, to show
That reason's light may guide us here below;
Plato her voice, and good Aurelius heard, 255
She led the Pagan right, when Christians err'd.
Such modest sweetness temper'd manly sense,
When Mornay censur'd, none could take offence;
For truth by him, in winning forms convey'd,
Taught but the virtues which his life display'd. 260
His heart still lean'd the faults of men to bear,
While wisdom told him, all men had their share;
But 'midst surrounding vices ever pure,
Nor ease nor pleasure could his soul allure.
So thro' the bosom of the briny tides, 265
Thy limpid stream, fair Arethusa, glides,
And still unsully'd by surrounding waves,
Its taste unmix'd, its crystal brightness saves.

By

By friendship guided, gen'rous Mornay came
 Where Henry loiter'd, mindless of his fame; 270
 The artful god prolong'd his am'rous trance,
 And in her hero rul'd the fate of France.
 No sameness there the varied bliss destroy'd,
 No languor chill'd, no forward pleasure cloy'd;
 Each wish attain'd, another wish inspires; 275
 Each new enjoyment leads to new desires:
 Such vary'd ways to please, love taught D'Etree,
 Nor time nor habit, stole one charm away.
 The tyrant blush'd with anger, as he view'd
 Mornay and wisdom on his reign intrude : 280
 Revengeful instinct turn'd him to his dart,
 And aim'd the deadly shaft at Mornay's heart.
 His anger and his arms the sage defy'd,
 His breast the bounding arrow turn'd aside :
 Impatient for the monarch's lonely hour, 285
 He rov'd indignant thro' th' enchanted bower.
 Where silver streams enclose a myrtle grove,
 Sacred to mystery and timid love,
 With all her charms D'Etree her lover blest :
 Now flames consume, now languor fills his breast ; 290
 Soft drops of pleasure glisten'd in her eyes,
 Voluptuous tears, that love knows how to prize :
 No coy reserve the burning bliss restrain'd,
 Fond passion, prodigal of pleasure, reign'd ;
 Loye's speechless eloquence their lips employ, 295
 Short sighs and gentle murmurs speak their joy :

Their

Their panting hearts with glowing transport swell,
Which love alone inspires, alone can tell.

Young Pleasures, sporting in luxurious ease,
And infant Cupids on his armour seize ; 300
Some dragg'd the bloody cuirass o'er the ground,
Or from his thigh, the pond'rous blade unbound ;
Some from the casque the crystal torrent pour'd,
Wash'd off the crimson spot that stain'd the sword,
And laugh as in their feeble hands they wield 305
The crown's support, the terror of the field.

Discord, who view'd him with insulting spite,
In savage accents spoke her fierce delight ;
Rous'd up the League, the happy moment prest,
Cherish'd her drooping serpents in her breast ; 310
And while the monarch languish'd in repose,
Blew the shrill blast, that gather'd all his foes.

A conscious blush on Henry's forehead glow'd
As Mornay met him in the soft abode :
Silent at first the mutual look they fear'd, 315
But in that silence all the mind appear'd :
The down-cast eye to Henry's soul convey'd,
How wide from virtue and from fame he stray'd.

The gentlest touch of blame we scarce endure,
How oft we lose the friend we mean to cure ; 320
But Henry thus :---“ My friend, be ever dear,
Who speaks of virtue still is welcome here ;
Come to my heart, which still for glory burns ;
My fame, my spirit, with my friend returns ;

Away

Away the sweets of vile ignoble rest! 325
 The soft delusion which my soul possess!
 Far be the slave enamour'd of his chains;
 This last great conquest o'er myself remains :
 Glory beams forth---and love no more shall sway ;
 The blood of Spain shall wash the stain away." 330
 " There," Mornay cried, " the monarch's voice I own ;
 There spoke the guardian of the Gallic throne :
 Love, thus subdu'd, adds lustre to your state;
 Blest who ne'er feels it,---but who conquers, great."
 As Henry's lips pronounc'd the last farewell, 335
 What adverse passions in his breast rebel :
 Full of the beauty he adores and flies,
 He blames his tears, but tears still fill his eyes :
 Now Mornay calls, now tender love retains ;
 He goes, returns, and going still remains : 340
 But when she languish'd in his last embrace,
 Colour and life forsook her lovely face ;
 A sudden night obscur'd her radiant eyes :
 The God beheld---air echo'd with his cries ;
 He trembled, lest the envious shades of night 345
 Should rob his empire of a nymph so bright,
 And quench for ever 'midst th' unfeeling dead,
 The flames those heav'nly eyes were form'd to spread :
 He prest the drooping beauty in his arms,
 With gentle sounds recall'd her faded charms ; 350
 Her eyes half rais'd, she sought her love in vain,
 Sigh'd out his name, and dropp'd their lids again.

Again

Again to life and love he call'd the fair,
And bid young Hope repeat the tender prayer.
But Mornay's soul nor grief nor beauty move,
Virtue and glory triumph over love ;
The vanquish'd God with sullen shame withdrew,
And far from Anet's domes indignant flew.

355



NOTES



NOTES

TO

CANTO IX.

(1) **W**HERE *fam'd Idalia's.*] This description of the Palace and the Court of Love is entirely allegorical: It is not the Son of Venus and the God of Fable that the Poet paints, but the most violent passion of the human soul, with all the pains, the pleasures, the fatal and unaccountable disorders which accompany it. He has chosen the Island of Cyprus for his scene, because its inhabitants were supposed to be more under the influence of this passion than those of any other country: There, a particular worship was paid to the God who inspired it, and to his mother, the Goddess of Beauty: Love was there the only business of life. How shallow are those philosophers who seem to treat it with a sort of contempt in their systems of morality.—Whoever will reflect upon it, I believe, will own that in some shape or other it governs mankind during more than three parts of their life, and that those minds which possess most energy and activity are most subject to it. Some traits of Love are certainly most beautifully painted in this ninth Canto; but the beginning, the progress, the fatal end, all the delirium of the passion, are no where so well described as in the fourth book of Virgil's *Æneid*.

(2) *The amorous Stream.*] The loves of Alpheus and Arethusa are, I think, told in Ovid. Love guided the river Alpheus by subterraneous passages to the bed of the nymph Arethusa.

(3) *Vaucluse.*] Near Gordes, in Provence, famous for being the retreat of the Poet Petrarch. The fountain which he so often sung is most romantically placed in a dark cavern in the side of a mountain; it is unfathomable, and clear as crystal as far as the eye can reach: from it spring several rivulets which water the delightful

E c

valleys

valleys of Lile and Carpentras. Laura, the beautiful and virtuous object of Petrarch's ardent affection during twenty years before her death, and twenty years after, was the wife of Hugues de Sades, of a noble family which still exists at Avignon. In a letter to his friend, the Bishop of Lombes, is a most eloquent description of his feelings: "Would to heaven, my friend, that what I feel were the effect of an heated imagination (for it seems the good prelate thought his passion the production of a Poet's fancy): No, we may act the fury, the delirium of a fever, but who can assume the pallid countenance, the weak and tottering limbs that real sickness only can produce? How often have you witnessed all these symptoms in me, how often have you pitied your wretched Petrarch." After having spent two whole years at Vaucluse in hopes to get the better of his passion, and wean his soul from this enchanting woman, he cries, "It is all in vain, her phantom still haunts my solitude, still pursues my steps: Thrice in the silence of the night it entered my apartment and stood before my couch; I started from my sleep, and through the darkness and inclemency of a winter's night followed the lovely shade through rocks and caverns till it vanished and left me forlorn and alone." Nothing can be more pathetic than the lines written with his own hand in his Virgil, which is preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. He tells the year, the day, the hour, the spot where he first saw her; her shape, her air, her dress, the minutest circumstances were deeply engraved upon his mind: He then describes in a few words his feelings when he heard of her death, which was occasioned by the plague at Avignon, while she was yet in the bloom of beauty.—She is interred in the church of the Cordeliers at Avignon, where Petrarch first saw her: On her tomb is an inscription almost illegible. Opposite to her lies the brave Crillon:—

The paths of glory lead but to the grave!—
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave.

(4) Anet.] Was built by Henry II. for his beautiful mistress Diane de Poitiers; her cypher, interwoven with Henry's, formed the ornament of the ceilings; and on the walls are still seen her devices, with an arrow and the words *Consequitur quod cunque petit*: Sure to attain its aim.—A Diana treading on a Cupid—with *Omnium victorem vici*: I conquered him who conquers all. Her favours, it is said, were first enjoyed by Francis II. as the price of her father's life, condemned for favouring the desertion of the connetable de Bourbon. Every age of a beautiful woman probably has its particular charms. Helen, by all the rules of chronology, must have been much past fifty, and had led a life not the most favourable to the preservation of beauty—

———When war-worn vet'rans own'd,
A look from her o'erpaid their ten campaigns,
And Priam smil'd upon his ravag'd plains.
Ninon de l'Enclos, past eighty, inspired the most violent passions, and was not
much

much younger when her son, who loved her to distraction, discovered her to be his mother, and killed himself in despair. Diane de Poitiers was much past the bloom of youth, near fifty perhaps, when she captivated the young heart of Henry II. She was created dutchess of Valentinois after the death of her husband, the grand connetable, to whom she was married very young, but not before her adventure with Francis I. The disparity of age between her and Henry II. gave rise to a thousand foolish stories of philtres and enchantments. It is certain he remained most tenderly attached to her till he was killed at a tournament by Montgomery, still wearing her colours, black and white, for the lovely widow whom he served.—With beauty and irresistible grace and manners, Diana possessed a dignity of spirit which in the most trying moments triumphed over the malice of her enemies. When torn from the king, that her sorrow might not disturb his last moments, the Queen Catherine of Medicis (See Note (13), Canto II.) sent her an insolent message to restore the jewels and ornaments she had received from Henry. “Is he then dead?—” No, but he cannot survive.—“Go then and tell the Queen, that while he breathes I obey no will but his!—and when he breathes no more, I too shall be out of the power of my enemies.”—However she did not die for him. Brantôme saw her at Orleans, fresh and beautiful as ever, at the age of 70, sitting her horse as gracefully as at fifteen. “No eyes,” he says, “could behold her without the heart feeling the softest emotions:—her beauty, her grace, her dignity, had lost nothing of their lustre; the whiteness and softness of her skin, for which no art or paint had ever been employed, was above all enchanting.” “I do firmly believe,” adds this enamoured author, “that if this lovely dutchess had lived to be an hundred, so admirably formed were her limbs, so perfect her features, of so particular a nature her whole person, she would have defied the power of time. What pity earth should ever cover so much beauty.”—Not only Anet, but the Castle of St. Germain en Laye, was built in honor of Diana, and in the form of a D.

(5) D’Etree.] Gabrielle, of an ancient house in Picardy, daughter and granddaughter of a Grand-master of Artillery, married to the Seigneur de Liancourt, and afterwards Dutchess of Beaufort. Henry fell in love with her during the siege of Paris; in one of his visits to her he was very near being taken as he past the enemy’s camp in the disguise of a peasant. His passion got so entire an ascendancy over his reason, that at length she prevailed upon him to promise to divorce his wife Margaret of Valois and marry her. He had actually sent to Rome to procure a dispensation. The Pope Clement VIII. was exceedingly embarrassed: I have read that, one day, after having exhausted all the ordinary means of politics, he rose from the council, retired to his oratory, returned, and cried, “God will settle this matter.” The sudden death of the beautiful Gabrielle saved Henry from this disgrace, and his country probably from great misfortunes. At the approach of Easter she withdrew from the king, that he

might with more decency fulfil the religious duties of the season. He accompanied her half-way to Paris; the excess of their grief at a separation intended to be so short had something prophetic in it. She could scarcely be torn from his arms, and often repeated that she was there for the last time. She was then with child for the fourth time. Henry was not less affected, on her arrival at Paris she dined at the financier Zanet's, where she was to lodge: it was Holy Thursday and in the evening she assisted at Tenebres: as she was walking in the garden, on her return she was struck with an apoplexy in the brain; she recovered from this first fit, and insisted on being carried from the house she was in to her aunt's, Madame de Sourdis; the next day she had several fits and convulsions, and in one of them expired, on the Saturday morning April 1599. The king was long inconsolable; and ever retained the warmest affection for the children he had had by her.—A few days before her return to Paris, as Henry was hunting in the forest of Fontainebleau, he and his attendants were struck by the distant cry of hounds gaining fast upon them, and followed through the wood by a gigantic black figure who cheered them with a voice like thunder, and amidst his cries address these words to Henry—"M'entendez vous—M'attendez vous—Amendez vous!" and disappeared. The king and court were struck with terror; but the peasantry assured them that this black giant was well known in the forest, where he often appeared with a large train of hounds and horses, but was never known to do any injury.

(6) The faithless partner.] Helen, her story is well known. Theseus ran away with her when she was very young; but, like Angelica, her virtue was not endangered by her juvenile adventures.

(7) She who conquer'd.] Cleopatra. Mark Anthony ordered her to meet him at Tarsis, but the artful Princess was determined that beauty should triumph over the conqueror: she sailed up the Cydnus in a galley of a most elegant form, covered with gold and silver; the cordage was twisted gold and silk—the sails silk, of the richest purple; her crew were men of the finest forms, their oars beat time to the most melodious music, she sat upon the deck in the dress and attitude of Venus; her attendants represented the Graces and the Nymphs: the shrouds were filled with beautiful Children who might indeed be mistaken for the sons of Venus, as she herself was for the Goddess.—The triumph of beauty was complete: the tribunal of the conqueror was deserted, while sounds of adoration and clouds of incense rose from the banks of the river.—Anthony himself quitted his solitary grandeur, went before the Princess, confessed the irresistible power of beauty and lost the world for Ægypt's Queen and love.—All the power of her charms failed upon the cold heart of Augustus. The woman whose mind was not inferior to the beauty of her body, scorned to be the ornament of his triumph and died by the sting of a serpent. Augustus conquered love, and at an advanced age died Master of the world.

CANTO



CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

THE King returns to his army and continues the siege of Paris.—Single combat between the Vicomte de Turenne and the Chevalier D'Aumale.—Dreadful famine in the town.—The King himself sends provisions to the inhabitants.—Heaven at last gives him the reward of Virtue.—Truth descends and enlightens him.—Paris opens her gates.—Mayne submits to his power.—The League is dissolved.—And France—her King, her Conqueror and her Father owns.



THE
HENRIADE.

CANTO X.

THOSE hours in Love and wanton pleasure lost.
Reviv'd the spirit of the vanquish'd host ;
Mayne's restless mind some new exploit prepar'd,
His rising hope the people fondly shar'd :
But vain the hope—for bursting from his chain, 5
Bourbon impatient darted on the plain.
Still with the smoking wrecks of vengeance strew'd,
Their foe once more those frighted ramparts view'd ;
Around their walls his angry standards wav'd,
Those walls so lately by his mercy sav'd 10
When Heav'n itself restrain'd his vengeful hand :
His troops again their destin'd prey demand ;
Their shouts re-echo thro' each guilty street,
Where round their chief the trembling rebels meet.
But he whose soul no timid councils knew, 15
D'Aumale, thus bold address the dastard crew ;
“ Shall

" Shall we, the men who Bourbon's force defy'd,
Behind our walls like frightened children hide?
Warriors of France, your wonted boast display,
Who first attacks his foe, ensures the day;
Who waits th' assault an easy conquest falls,
Our strength is in ourselves, not in our walls:
The pride of France is in the field display'd,
Her laurels wither in the rampart's shade.
We are your bulwarks---Soldiers to the field!
He's sure to conquer who disdains to yield."
He ceas'd: but all was silence.---In their eyes
Their daunted soul the burning chief descries:
" Thus, tamely thus, does France her fame resign?
No share" he cries, " in this disgrace be mine:
What armies dare not---I alone defy,
Learn then to conquer, or at least to die."
And looking fierce disdain while yet he spoke,
Thro' the opposing crowd indignant broke.
As from the gates to Henry's camp he darts,
His angry mind a herald thus imparts:
" Attend, ye warriors, to whom fame is dear;
D'Aumale expects you,---in the lists appear."
Scarce was the challenge thro' the tents proclaim'd,
To meet D'Aumale each hero's bosom flam'd,
And each had merit to deserve the choice;
But brave Turenne was nam'd by Henry's voice.
What transport in his youthful bosom glow'd!
When thus his king the royal sword bestow'd:

20

25

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35

40

" Go

" Go, noble youth, in thee our hosts confide;
 Go, triumph o'er the foe's insulting pride :
 France and her king upon thy arm depend,
 Thy country's glory and thine own defend."
 The champion knelt and firmly grasp'd the sword,
 " This shall confirm," he cried, " my sov'reign's word :
 Him and this sacred pledge I here attest."
 He rose, and Henry clasp'd him to his breast.
 The sacred heralds now the lists proclaim,
 And proud D'Aumale exulting forward came.
 With hope elate, or chill'd with doubtful fear,
 On either side the adverse hosts appear.
 The crowded walls, the tented plains around,
 With shouts of joy, of hope, of fear resound.
 But o'er the town a gloomy cloud arose,
 Dark as the vapours gath'ring storms compose,
 Its burning flank sulphureous lightnings burst,
 And vomit forth from hell the fiends accurst.
 Fierce Discord with Fanaticism strode;
 Dark Policy her treach'rous visage shew'd ;
 War's angry demon flush'd with reeking gore,
 Gods drunk with blood,---such gods the League adore.
 High on the walls the horrid band appear,
 Prepare for combat, and their hero cheer.
 What lucid streams the vault of Heav'n divide?
 See thro' the azure field God's herald glide!
 Celestial beams around his forehead play,
 His flaming pinions mark his rapid way,

F f

And



And darting bright effulgence as he flies,
 Furrow with trembling light the western skies.
 One hand the pledge of peace the Olive rais'd, 75
 In one the sword of heav'nly vengeance blaz'd;
 That blade which first almighty anger drew,
 To smite the sons of Ægypt's harden'd crew.
 Panic confusion seiz'd the fiends of hell,
 Their serpents droop'd, their poison'd weapon's fell; 80
 Trembling they stood before the lifted sword,
 As he of old by Philistines ador'd,
 Dagon, who totter'd from his shrine of blood,
 As God's mysterious Ark before him stood.
 God from his throne the lot of battle weigh'd, 85
 Earth, Heav'n and Hell the mighty scene survey'd;
 At Henry's word th' impatient chiefs advance,
 In honor's field to try the fate of France.
 Their naked arm no massy buckler bore,
 No coat of steel their dauntless bosoms wore; 90
 No crested helms their threat'ning brows adorn,
 Defence and ornament alike they scorn:
 A sword their weapon, courage all their shield,
 Proudly they enter on the measur'd field:
 " Great King of Kings !" Turenne exclaims, " descend, 95
 Be Henry's judge, the righteous cause defend:
 Weak are the means which human powers supply,
 On thee and on thy justice I rely."
 " And I rely upon this arm alone,"
 Cries fierce D'Aumale, " my strength is all my own, 100
 By

By dastard tremblers be thy God implor'd,
 A soldier's providence is in his sword:
 No cares for man to heav'nly powers extend,
 Just or unjust upon success depend."

Then silent with a glance of sullen pride,
 Scornful his rival's tranquil valor ey'd. 105

The note of war the lifted trumpet sings,
 Fierce at the sound each eager champion springs:
 What human spirit can or human might,
 Strength, courage, art, activity unite, 110

Onward they press, attack, retreat, evade,
 In rapid circles whirl the shining blade;
 Now close, now distant, now retiring part,
 Now forward with collected fury dart,
 Strike, feign, redouble, now the point deceive, 115

Now on the blade the baffl'd edge receive:
 The clashing weapons shoot a sparkling gleam,
 Like rays reflected from the rippling stream,
 The gazing crowd with savage joy survey
 The skill, the force, the valour they display. 120

Each bosom pants with sudden hopes and fears,
 Conqu'ring or conquer'd now each chief appears;
 D'Aumale's proud strength unbridl'd fury guides:
 In cool delib'rate art Turenne confides,
 His rash attack with steady valour meets, 125

'Till boiling rage its own design defeats.
 Tir'd with the efforts headlong fury made,
 His strength unnerv'd his burning soul betray'd,

Breathless, exhausted soon D'Aumale remains,
 Scarcely his bending arm his sword sustains. 130
 But rage collected blaz'd in Turenne's breast,
 Fierce on his foe with doubled force he prest,
 Menac'd, advanc'd and with unerring art
 Plung'd the sharp weapon thro' his panting heart:
 The hero stagg'ring prest the blood-stain'd ground. 135
 In hidious shrieks the fiends of hell resound---
 " Bourbon prevails and Discord is no more,
 Lost is the League,---The reign of hell is o'er."
 The sound re-echo'd from the walls again,
 While pale, expiring, stretch'd upon the plain 140
 Their champion grasp'd his falling sword in vain.
 Shame and revenge his dying aspect fir'd,
 Threats half pronounc'd upon his lip expir'd,
 Till raising towards the town his languid head,
 With one deep groan his soul indignant fled. 145
 You saw him fall---and hope forsook your mind,
 Mayenne, to shame and to remorse consign'd;
 Now thro' the walls, in solemn, slow parade,
 Mournful the troops their breathless chief (1) convey'd.
 The wretched sight a gen'ral terror spread, 150
 The ghastly lip half-clos'd, the hanging head,
 The clotted hair, the forehead stain'd with blood,
 The dim fix'd eye where death triumphant stood.
 Fear chill'd their souls, their voices shame restrain'd,
 Grief found no vent---a deadly silence reign'd. 155
 Trembling

Trembling and mute they stood---till from afar,
 The air was rent with spreading cries of war:
 Around their king the royal legions close;
 "Loose now," they cried, "our vengeance on thy foes,
 Sound the assault---avenge a monarch's wrong, 160
 Fill, fill, the vengeance we've deferr'd too long."
 But Lewis from above his rage repress,
 And calm'd the passion rising in his breast.
 Like him unseen, who guides the circling sphere,
 Holds the dark storm suspended in the air, 165
 Binds heaving ocean in th' eternal chain,
 While billows rage, rebel, and fret in vain:
 Dominions rise and fall at his command,
 The heart of man is moulded by his hand.
 Still slow to punish, still inclin'd to spare, 170
 His rebel children yet were Henry's care:
 Eager his warriors fury to restrain,
 His subjects heart was all he wish'd to gain,
 He sought no bloody triumph in the field;
 But gave them leisure to repent and yield, 175
 And wisely left to Famine's iron hand (2),
 To punish and subdue the stubborn band.
 Impatient, till compell'd by griping want,
 They crav'd the mercy which he long'd to grant.
 Pamper'd in ease, a proud luxurious race, 175
 Could they the vile attack of hunger face?
 But bigot fury harden'd in despair
 Trains the fierce mind to suffer as to dare.

The

The gen'rous respite which his sword allow'd,
 With new presumption fill'd the thoughtless crowd; 180
 Weakness they deem, what royal mercy gave,
 Insult his patience, and his vengeance brave.
 But when the captive waves of Seine, no more
 The tribute of surrounding harvests bore,
 Her meagre front when greedy famine rear'd 185
 And death insatiate on her step appear'd,
 Then thro' each street those spacious walls inclose,
 The yell of Hunger and Despair arose:
 With dying voice and weak extended hand
 The famish'd crew the food of life demand. 190
 Now view the rich---what aid can wealth afford!
 They starve and perish on the useless hord,
 No more their gilded roofs with joy resound,
 No more with festive flow'rs their temples bound,
 No nice refinements of luxurious waste, 195
 Urge the tir'd sense and stimulate the taste.
 Pale, squalid, meagre, horrid to behold,
 They pine, despair, and curse their treach'rous gold.
 Here in wild rage whole families expire,
 The infant's shrieks assail the drooping sire, 200
 There famish'd spectres with their parting gasp,
 Tear the foul offal from each others grasp,
 Or, spite of nature, from the charnal vault
 A horrid food the starving wretches sought,
 Rob the dank mansion of the frightened dead, 205
 And knead their bony fragments (3) into bread!

What

What will not yield to Hunger's ruthless power ?
 Their fathers mould'ring remnants they devour !
 The death they fled was in the dire repast,
 The first inhuman morsel was the last. 216
 But they—the men who drove them to despair,
 No portion of the common burden bear.
 Their Doctors lurk beneath religion's shrine,
 To their base selves their pious cares confine ;
 Profuse of Heav'n their steril blessings pour, 218
 But close to misery their selfish store (4) :
 With impious prophecy God's name blaspheme,
 Now bid them suffer in their Saviour's name,
 Now raise their hopes and shew their triumph nigh,
 And manna dropping from the partial sky, 220
 Till worn with hope, or tortur'd by despair,
 Death became easier than life to bear.
 A foreign race the hapless town maintain'd,
 In Belgia's plains, Helvetia's mountains (5) train'd ;
 Whose sword was ready for each side that paid, 222
 Their staple blood, and war their only trade.
 Vain hope ! that gold could buy a faithful friend,
 Tyrants of those they bargain'd to defend ;
 With lawless rapine thro' the town they roam,
 Profane th' asylum of each sacred home ; 224
 Death, menace, torture mark'd their bloody way :
 But not to make the trembling maid their prey,
 Nor tear the matron from her husband's bed,
 Nor seize his useless treasure—but for bread.

Not urg'd by avarice not by lust inflam'd, 235
 Each other passion tyrant hunger tam'd ;
 Some scanty remnant of unwholesome food,
 Was all that menace, torture, death pursu'd.

A Woman—shall the trembling muse proceed
 And give to memory the horrid deed ! 240

A Mother (6), driv'n by their inhuman force,
 To yield of ling'ring life the last resource,
 Of ev'ry means, of ev'ry hope despoil'd,
 Clasp'd to a sterile breast her famish'd child.
 Till wild with fury, savage from despair, 245

She seiz'd the infant---in her mingl'd air
 Rage, pity, love, regret and want contend,
 Fondly she views his tender arms extend,
 His innocence, his wants, his infant grace,
 A smile that gleam'd upon his sickly face. 250

Thrice had her hand uprais'd the deadly blade,
 And thrice a Mother's heart her hand betray'd.
 Hunger and rage prevail'd—she grasp'd the knife,
 Curst the ill-fated womb that gave him life
 To pine and perish in the pangs of want ; 255

Or should hard fate a longer period grant,
 To live to see the ruin of the land,
 And fall sad victim of some bloody hand.
 “ Die ere your fate's as wretched as my own,
 Let Paris tremble at a crime unknown ! 260

Give back the life you got within my womb,
 This breast, that nourish'd you, shall be your tomb.

She

She said, and hid the knife within his heart;
 Wildly she tore the quiv'ring limbs apart :
 Keen hunger drove her on and blind despair, 265
 The curling flames the dread repast prepare :
 Soon to the meal the rising vapour call'd
 The prowling herd, by ruthless hunger gall'd,
 And soon their shouts their savage joy betray,
 Like bears or lions when they scent their prey. 270
 The shatter'd doors admit the famish'd crew :
 God! what a scene of horror met their view :
 A human corpse prepar'd for human food!
 A frantic mother in its blood embru'd!
 " Yes, 'tis my son," she cried, " monsters attend! 275
 You bid these hands his tender fibres rend,
 Now glut your hunger—son nor mother spare,
 Keep nature down—and dare what women dare :
 What! does the feast your savage souls affright!
 Tigers fall to—such food is your delight. 280
 With furious gesture thus her soul exprest,
 She plung'd the reeking knife into her breast :
 Horror, amaze, the savage cohort stun'd,
 Stranger and citizen the mansion shun'd,
 They fear'd heav'n's vengeance on the guilty spot, 285
 And wept, and call'd on death to mend their wretched lot.
 When fame had spread the tale to Henry's tent,
 A father's care the monarch's bosom rent,
 " Oh God?" he cried, " to whom all hearts are known,
 Be thou my Judge—be theirs the fault alone; 290

With spotless hands thy judgment I implore,
 These hands the olive branch to Paris bore,
 And if my sword delay the dreadful hour,
 Thou know'st 'tis mercy and not want of pow'r :
 For Mayne's ambition let his victims bleed, 295
 His be the guilt of ev'ry lawless deed,
 And his the despot's common, stale excuse,
 That pleads necessity for each abuse ;
 Him let them curse—for Henry holds from God,
 A father's sceptre, not a tyrant's rod ; 305
 Let Mayne the measure of disaster fill,
 My rebel children are my children still.
 Against myself my mercy let them use,
 I'll save my people tho' my crown I lose ;
 This on my tomb, at least, shall Truth record, 310
 That trusting more to mercy than his sword,
 Arm'd 'gainst his subjects, for their good alone,
 Henry preferr'd their welfare to his throne."
 " Ye chiefs ! let war no more terrific frown,
 In peaceful accents hail the famish'd town, 315
 Bear to our drooping foes (7) a gen'rous aid."
 He spoke—the godlike order was obey'd.
 Soon on the ramparts as the voice was heard,
 Trembling and pale a ghastly crowd appear'd,
 Such spectres as the frightened realms of night 315
 Cast up reluctant on the hated light,
 Of old when potent herbs and magic spell,
 Could bind the fiery surge and heave the valves of hell.

Curs'd by their leaders, by their foes reliev'd,
 And doubting still the mercy they reciev'd, 320
 Amaz'd they view the sword and deadly spear
 The gen'rous fruit of Henry's mercy bear;
 The pointed steel, which fate unerring bore,
 Now proffers life as it gave death before.
 "Are these," they cry'd, "the men our chiefs defin'd 325
 The foes of God, the scourges of mankind?
 Lo! how the king, that object of our fears,
 In deeds of mercy like a God appears;
 Above revenge—he conquers to forgive;
 Blest who beneath his happy empire live. 330
 Let loyal zeal our errors past atone,
 Our forfeit lives be spent to raise his throne."
 Such were the zealous phrases which exprest
 The short-liv'd feelings of their fickle breast:
 But fruitless ardor, ineffectual words, 335
 Are all, alas! the vulgar soul affords;
 Too soon their priests, with deep insidious art,
 Represt the virtues rising in their heart:
 Those priests, whose eloquence too oft prevails;
 Whose art too long this wretched land bewails. 340
 "O! lost to honor, and to God untrue,
 What sordid lures your timid souls subdue.
 Go! sell your God—the martyr's crown forego,
 To add some wretched days to shame and woe:
 The bribes of heresy your hands receive, 345
 Think you an impious tyrant can forgive?

Turn on himself the treach'rous boon he gave,
 Your souls, your God, your sacred temples save.
 Thus spoke the bigots, and their words too soon
 Effac'd the memory of Henry's boon.

350

Again with bitter zeal their bosoms glow'd,
 They hate the life his gen'rous care bestow'd.

While clam'rous fury rul'd the guilty town,
 God on the monarch look'd propitious down ;
 Heav'n own'd his virtues.---From th' ethereal space
 The sainted father of the Bourbon race,
 Lewis, beheld the course of Fate was run,
 Soon shall the King of Kings adopt his son.

355

Each rising doubt celestial faith repress,
 Soft soothing hope his anxious soul possess ;
 Seraphic love within his bosom shone,
 And led his steps to God's immortal throne.

360

High in eternal beams of light sublime,
 God plac'd his throne before the birth of time,
 Heav'n spreads beneath his feet, in measur'd round
 Myriads of circling stars his name resound,
 His being, wisdom, love and power combin'd,
 For ever sep'rate and for ever join'd.

365

Full of his glory, wrapt in pure delight,
 His saints enjoy the beatific sight ;
 Veil'd in their wings the burning seraphs stand,
 To bear to countless worlds his high command :
 'Tis they bid earth its various forms assume,
 To worldly powers they bring the fatal doom,

370

While

While, born to error, vain presuming man
 Arraigns the wisdom of th' almighty plan :
 To servile Rome, they read her stern decree,
 Turn'd her to nations barb'rous, fierce and free,
 Spain to the Moor, to Tartars Asia gave,
 And still found tyrants for the willing slave. 380
 Just and mysterious are the ways of heav'n,
 Kings are not always in its anger giv'n :
 Some cares for man to heav'nly pow'rs extend,
 To spotless hands the sceptre may descend.
 The sainted monarch bow'd before the throne, 385
 And thus address'd the God in plaintive tone:
 " Father of all ! if thy omniscient care
 The sons of earth and earthly monarchs share,
 Lo ! wretched France---whom zeal mistaken leads,
 For thee, deceiv'd, her hapless people bleeds ; 390
 For thee denies her king, perverts her laws :
 Of all her crimes mistaken zeal the cause !
 Behold that king, in ev'ry virtue try'd,
 The world's delight---its terror and its pride:
 Oh God ! are all these virtues giv'n in vain ? 395
 Was Henry form'd in error to remain ?
 Must he, in whom thy own perfections shine,
 With guilty homage still approach thy shrine ?
 To whom, O God ! shall truth be known, to whom,
 If endless error must be Henry's doom ? 400
 Thy spotless light, O God ! vouchsafe to pour
 To Truth her son---to France her king restore :

Con-

Confound the League, ambitious pow'r repress,
 Let France her king,---his realm let Henry bless :
 Thy living justice ev'ry heart shall praise, 405
 One hymn of glory ev'ry temple raise."
 God heard the Saint, the great almighty word
 The deep foundations of creation stirr'd:
 All nature trembl'd:---thro' all human kind
 A conscious terror stung the guilty mind. 410
 Appall'd the League :---but Henry's virtuous breast
 The hand of a protecting God confest.
 Fair Truth, by man so long, so vainly sought,
 Burst forth refulgent from th' ethereal vault:
 In Henry's tent the heav'nly guest descends, 415
 Her virgin form a veil at first defends ;
 Her native splendor soon the veil defies,
 And bright, not dazzling, beams on Henry's eyes.
 Her power supreme, the monarch's heart allows,
 Eternal love, eternal worship, vows ; 420
 Admits religion's deep mysterious plan
 Above the reas'ning pow'rs of feeble man.
 Her church, unalter'd, spread thro' ev'ry clime,
 The same in ev'ry fortune, ev'ry time,
 Free, but beneath a chief---for endless days, 425
 In God's elect his boundless power to praise:
 Christ of his chosen sons the living food,
 His healing sacrifice each day renew'd ;
 Man's mortal sense suspended, to adore
 A God in bread which is itself no more: 430
 His

His heart obedient own'd whate'er she taught
 Mysterious and above the reach of thought.
 The Saint descends, in ev'ry wish content,
 And bears the olive branch to Henry's tent;
 Lewis to Paris was the hero's guide, 435
 The lofty ramparts tremble and divide;
 Proclaim'd by God, the king triumphant came (8),
 The rebel leaders fled to hide their shame:
 The priests were silent, and the League dismay'd
 Trembled at Henry's aspect and obey'd:— 440
 With one accord the people round his throne,
 Their king, their conqu'ror, and their father own.
 To France the day of peace and glory rose,
 Too long retarded and too soon to close.
 Austria's proud eagle hung its head disgrac'd; 445
 A son sincere triumphant Rome embrac'd:
 Intrigue and Discord sunk to endless night;
 Mayne's haughty soul admits a monarch's right;
 To Henry's feet his heart repentant brings
 The best of subjects to the best of kings. 450





NOTES

TO

CANTO X.

(1) **THEIR** breathless chief.] The chevalier D'Aumale, of the house of Lorraine, who really possessed all the impetuous valour with which the Poet paints him, was killed about this time at St. Denis. His duel with the vicomte de Turenne is a poetical fiction; but such combats were at that period very common. There is upon record a famous one between the Sieur de Marivaux, a royalist, and Sieur Claude de Marolles, who was the champion of the League. They fought behind the Carthusian Convent in Paris, and in presence of the people and army the very day that Henry III. was assassinated. Marolles was the conqueror. There is also, in the French history, an account of a famous duel between Jarnac and La Chatenerie, at which the king was present.

(2) To Famine's iron hand.] Henry IV. blockaded Paris in 1590 with less than 20,000 men, and reduced the inhabitants to all the extremities here described.

(3) Bony fragments into bread.] It was the Ambassador of Spain, with the League, who gave them this horrid receipt to make bread with the bones of the dead. It was put in execution, and served only to hasten the miserable end of many thousand human beings by the dreadful disorders it occasioned. It is a strange weakness, but a natural one, in man.—They would sooner have starved than eat the fresh bodies of their fellow-soldiers just killed; but they did not scruple to eat poisonous bread made of the bones of their forefathers.

(4) Their selfish store.] Mezeray says, that, the convents of the Monks were visited, and all of them were well stored with provisions not excepting the Capucins.

H h

(5) Helve-

(5) Helvetia's mountains.] Cotemporary historians mention the most cruel and barbarous excesses committed by the Swiss in the pay of the Duc de Mayne: to these only do these lines of the French poet allude, and not to the honest, sensible, respectable Cantons of Switzerland; who have given many a noble lesson of magnanimity and wisdom to the world, and preserved their own liberty and the dignity of their Government, by cautiously avoiding any interference with that of other Nations.

(6) A Mother.] This horrid event is mentioned in all the memoirs of those times; nor is it a solitary instance of the power of fanaticism: the same thing happened in the town of Sancerre.

(7) Bear to our drooping foes.] Such was the goodness of Henry IV. that, Mezeray says, he allowed his Officers to send provisions to their friends and to the ladies shut up in the town, and his soldiers followed their example. He generously also permitted to pass through his lines almost all those who chose to retire from the town: thus were the besieged really fed by the besiegers.

(8) The king triumphant came.] The blockade and dreadful famine of Paris happened in 1590: Henry IV. did not enter Paris till March 1594. He became a Catholic in July 1593. But it was necessary in the poem to depart from the strict Chronology of these events.





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